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THE SMART SET

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THE WAGE OF CHARACTER

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

"Better," sang Yoshida Shoin, "to be a crystal and to be broken than to be a tile upon the housetop and to remain."

ROMANTIC friendship between young men is rare in the United States. Where the intercourse of the sexes is made so easy, girls and boys are prone to give their childish confidences to each other. In their maturer years, American men seek the companionship of women as a respite from the pressure of drudging routine and ugly environment. In fact, once free from the mart and the forum, they are apt to shun one another. The clubs, to be sure, are convenient places in which to dine and play cards, but they are not Meccas of social solace.

There are, however, timid and reserved souls to whom the barrier of sex always remains an intangible obstacle to deep communion. They seem the very ones who would drink refreshment and courage from the fountain of feminine sympathy; they are the very ones who forego it. Why? The question is unanswerable. Perhaps some early slight to vanity, some never forgotten wound dealt by a thoughtless feminine hand, has sunk its sting of doubt and distress into their mind. Perhaps they know that in them lies a capability for morbid suffering of which woman holds the key. They prefer safety to danger. Somewhat cowardly, they hug the shores, and are contented that their male friends should hoist the sail and woo the winds.

Hamilton Darrell, when at college, was not known to have a girl or woman friend. He certainly had no mistress. Yet he was no woman hater.

On the contrary, he respected women and could make himself sufficiently agreeable to them. But he did not give himself to their pursuit. They, on their part, met him, if civilly, with indifference. There is a certain form of moral superiority in men which women secretly resent. This Darrell possessed. All the romance that inspired his nature, all the desire to look up and reverence, all the ambition for another's success which seems a part of well-balanced characters, he bestowed on a male comrade. He seemed to find sufficient pleasure in the triumphs of his friend. Somewhat weak of frame, unblest with physical beauty, insignificant in person, he seemed to warm himself in the rays of Hazard Thorne's vitality. Hazard, *en bon prince*, allowed himself to be admired. The young men had rooms together in Cambridge, apartments fitted up with elegance, not to say luxury, and were—one by reason of his dominant personality, the other of his wealth—leaders of their particular set.

Thorne was not a pauper and Darrell was not repellent; but it is only on large lines that we reach conclusions. Penniless, the latter might have passed through four years of college life unobserved to graduation, while Thorne's income was too insignificant to lift him from obscurity. Darrell was very rich. He was in full possession of large rentals left to him by a bachelor uncle after whom he was named. At twenty-one he touched a capital mounting into

millions. His people were of the West. His father, a railroad magnate, had himself made and lost several fortunes. There were those who thought he would die poor. As he was a widower, with only two children—Hamilton, who was provided for, and his daughter Coralie—it was probable that there would be sufficient. Even his profligate expenditure would hardly leave the girl portionless. Yet there were moments when she herself felt anxiety, and once or twice already Hamilton had been obliged to come to the family's rescue. His father's methods, ideas, schemes, were strangely antagonistic to his more prudent temper. He was always uneasy, never happy, in Mr. Darrell, Senior's, presence. The elder man himself found little attraction in the fellowship of his only son. It was, perhaps, because of this harsh note in the home atmosphere that Hamilton attached himself so strongly to Hazard Thorne.

The demonstrations of this affection were not highly colored; never expressed in words. Even in deeds they lacked *éclat*. When he helped Hazard out of a scrape it was done, as it were, *sub rosa* and with a certain doggedness. He hated ostentatious beneficence only less than he hated gratitude. Notwithstanding this absence of sentimentality in their relations, Thorne had implicit faith in his chum's loyalty. It was one of the beliefs he held intact.

It may be said that Thorne's scrapes were not of a very serious sort. His embarrassments were generally financial. He was extravagant. To his entanglements of gallantry he brought, at this time of his career, a certain skilful self-defense and coldness. This may have arisen from dryness of heart or fastidiousness of temper, according to the situation or the point of view. Hamilton was inclined to accept the latter interpretation—to believe that his friend suffered a sense of profanation where others saw only amusement, and this because there was something in him

profound and real. The young ladies whom Thorne sometimes encountered at students' suppers in Boston, whose eyes were a little too dark, whose complexions were a little too fair, and whose lips were a little too red, left his senses at liberty to find escape. Their toils did not entrap more than their chains weighed, while the dainty maidens of Beacon or Mount Vernon street and the youthful matrons who chaperoned them, with their smooth, Greek-knotted hair, their clear, frank eyes, their thoughtful foreheads and the sharp outline of their chaste lips, failed to fire his imagination.

Shoulder to shoulder the friends fought their way through the changing fortune, enlightening experience and keen ordeal of college contest. Thorne graduated an easy victor in the classic as in the athletic arena, and with the calmness that conceals nerves of steel. Darrell, somewhat breathless, followed him; industrious in all studies, admirable in a few, a hopeless failure in sport. They took becoming honors. Thorne just missed the head of his class by a duck-shooting excursion on the eve of the examinations; Darrell, who did not shoot ducks, came in a highly commended fourth.

The friends felt a mixed sense of freedom and of pain when they packed their boxes, pulled down their curtains, emptied their bookshelves and blew out their lamps for the last time in their cozy Cambridge quarters. The chambers presented on this final evening the curious dusty forlornness of human habitations about to be vacated. Yesterday a tidy, orderly, graceful home; to-day a dirty, disorganized, vulgar domicile, a roof no more, whose discomfort one marvels to have endured. The sympathy of material things with one's own moods is one of the quaint studies of the reflective. The hotel bears the imprint of the transitory; the tenantless house is like a physiognomy without eyes. It has a blind stare as if it would say to the visitor, "What seekest thou here?" The pain was

more Darrell's than Thorne's. The former's life was made for him, hence pale; Thorne's was full of that element of uncertainty dear to adventurous spirits. Its possibilities were boundless; at least, so thought Darrell. He himself might dabble in science, politics, affairs. He knew the way forever made light, and that he would remain a dilettante. Not brilliant, not original, he inherited from a timid mother that effaced type which in her was accentuated by the crushing association with her tyrannic and powerful lord. Darrell blenched, as she had, before publicity. It was perhaps this shrinking quality, which his father called weakness, that so attached him to Hazard Thorne.

Hazard's taste was perfect. He was incapable of ridiculing what was delicate. This inherent taste he drew from a refined ancestry. Early an orphan, he had been brought up in the houses of two uncles. These uncles, the possessors of adequate fortunes, were in their day men of fashion and of importance. Owners of inherited wealth, they were never men of affairs. Like many well-born and well-nurtured New Yorkers, they had, after dawdling in German and English universities, filled posts in foreign embassies. When they returned to their own city they found themselves crowded out by Yankee invaders. Lacking the wish or the stamina to stem the current, they took themselves to their respective Hudson River estates—also inherited—and there led the useless, profitless, but decent existence of the American country gentleman. Here they nursed their worn-out traditions, tempered with a certain hostility against the encroachments of the new forces. No sons having been born to their households, the only descendant of a dead brother became as an own child to them. Rather to their disgust, he from boyhood insisted that if he was to go to college he would enter Harvard. They pointed out to him the advantage of English seats of learning, and one of them exhibited a sword-cut received at Heidelberg. If

not these, why was not Columbia good enough for a child of Knickerbocker lineage? Then the wife of one of these gentlemen, who, though Dutch on one side of her house, was suspected of hiding predilections for New England enterprise, push and possible pie, through a drop of Puritan ichor in her veins, remonstrated. She advised that the lad be given his own way. She also added, under her breath, that perhaps, after all, there might be some merit in people who had so successfully pushed the aborigines of Manhattan to the wall. In so saying she looked across the table somewhat defiantly at her husband, meeting his frowning astonishment with irreverent laughter. Being a woman of humor who sometimes wrote "upon the lintel of her doorpost 'whim,'" her sortie was forgiven her as a vagary of sex. However, she gained her point. The recalcitrant nephew was sent to Massachusetts.

The brothers, smoking their pipes on the stately porch of one of their Colonial dwellings, had, one night, decided the momentous question, not without much misgiving and protest and shaking of the head, possibly with some of those mystic signals with which Washington Irving tells us the doughty Antony Van Corlear's protests were met by Killian Van Rensselaer.

Thorne certainly learned far more at his *alma mater* than to pull an oar or construe Juvenal. What he unlearned was more to the purpose. He shook off a good deal of foolish family pride, rubbed away some prejudices, lost many ready-made opinions and also a vast amount of self-importance. It is only when we have gauged our own helplessness that we are really prepared to stand on our feet. The friends had entered Harvard as the last bugle of peace sounded over their country. The aroma of valor and heroism lingered over those fresh memorials to the brave boys who shouldered their muskets and fell before their race had begun. They sometimes regretted

that they were too late to face that mighty struggle before which other nations stood appalled. Now they sat and talked far into the night over their unknown futures.

"I have got to settle right down to work," said Thorne, with a quaint grimace, "to repair my much damaged fortunes."

Darrell laughed. He never smoked, but watched the fumes curl upward from Thorne's half-burned cigar.

"What are you looking at?"

"Are you superstitious?"

"We all are, I suppose. I'll be hanged if I care to have that black cat I met in the Delta so attentive to me as she was last night. It is deuced bad luck for a fellow who has got a lot of debts and not a ducat to pay them with to be followed about by a black cat. But why do you ask?"

"I said to myself that if that spiral column of smoke you blew into space a second ago reached the height of the bust of Homer before dispersing, I should have my wish."

"Well?"

"Well, it did." Darrell's discursive mind went on irrelevantly. "That smoke! what an epitome of character!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—" he threw back his head on the worn cushion of the condemned easy-chair he had presented to his landlady in the morning—"I mean there are two types of human beings in this world—those who scatter like the smoke, and those who concentrate."

"Explain."

"Philosophers—the *Hamlets*—who talk over what they would be at while others marry their mothers and jump into their fathers' fortunes, are the former. In emergency they scatter, hence remain ineffectual."

"You believe in one object and its hot chase, and no deviation to right or to left?"

"Exactly; no awakening to 'alien horns.'"

"It means sacrifice and a good deal of brutality," said Thorne, reflectively.

"Oh, it is, after all, a matter of temperament. The scatterer overrates obstacle, dignifies his antagonist, acknowledges defeat possible—perhaps deserved. The concentrator pooh-poohs obstacle, calls his antagonist a buffoon, knows he'll get there, and he does."

"I think I understand you. I've seen that sort of thing in public speakers. Self-trust gives the moral support required. One can't speak without conviction, any more than one can be a martyr for a cause in which one has ceased to believe. It is graceless enough to uphold anything without its faith."

"I have seen it in everything," said Darrell. "There was a lady once, a neighbor of ours, a rich woman, who had schemes of philanthropy. She instituted picnics for the town children on her grounds. Two children overate themselves; one of them died. I understand a little girl got sunstruck. She gave up her picnics the second year. She was a scatterer."

"Ha! ha! ha! In other words, she allowed herself to pause and reflect on the healthfulness of picnics in general, for city children in particular, and was lost."

"Yes, and the picnics. An excellent charity. Nobody of that kidney ever accomplishes anything."

"Overeating and sunstroke are mere side issues, not to be regarded by philanthropic genius," declared Thorne.

"Not to be paused for," added Darrell.

"And you, old man?"

"I am a scatterer in both intellect and character—weak-kneed and weak-livered. I'd stop to pick up the wounded on the battlefield, and lose the day. That sort of thing a true soldier knows can be done just as well after the battle."

"With a few more dead."

"With a few more dead! That is immaterial; the only thing of consequence in a battle is—victory. Ask the commanders."

"And I?"

"Your intellect concentrates. Sometimes I have feared . . ."

"For my character?"

"The future must prove."

"Then you think one and the same person may scatter in character and not in intellect, and *vice versa*?"

"Precisely."

"You've got a thoughtful mind, Hamilton."

"To my cost."

"Isn't it thought that rules the world?"

"Perhaps, in the long run. But no one life can use thought for its own benefit. We thinkers go to the wall. Providence knew I never could earn a ducat, and so sent me my bread and butter. I am grateful."

"Do you believe in Providence?"

"Yes, and in compensation and retribution."

"The wicked flourish."

"Do they? How do you know they flourish?"

"They're getting along."

"No, they're not, they're deteriorating; that's the only retribution, but that's as sure as death. Lost possibilities of character! how melancholy!"

There was a silence between the two. Did it hold prophecy?

After a moment Thorne spoke. "And your wish? You have scattered away from it."

"Oh, the wish!"

"Let's have it."

"You could help it along."

"Nonsense! You are the most tenacious fellow alive, once you've made up your mind to a thing. I'll bet on you, Darrell, every time, though you pose for inconsequence. If you're the living image of your mother, as your daddy once told me, you're a chip of the old man as far as obstinacy is concerned."

"Weak people are apt to be obstinate; only the strong are supple," he said. "My pigheadedness can't help me this time unless several other people are unexpectedly supple."

"Are they of the putty order?"

"No; you are not, are you?"

"More than you guess. A child

can bit and bridle me. I have got a slavish nature."

"Bah!"

"One has only to know how."

"There's one bit and bridle I'm afraid of for you."

"Eh?"

"Your laziness."

"I like that, after all this year's cramming."

"There are moments with you when it becomes a passion and rides you."

"Oh, saintly moral, where dost thou build thy nest?" laughed Thorne, stretching his long limbs.

He had a figure that men who liked him called spare, the women whom he had failed to flatter, lank.

"It all lies in the palm of our own hand, the moral of the tale," Darrell went on. "This one has a beginning."

"Hear! hear!"

The light vein of pleasantry died out of Darrell's words, and his small, deep eyes gleamed under their dark, arched eyebrows with sudden earnestness.

"You never met my little sister, did you, Hazard?"

"When you put me up to roost in the parent tree Miss Darrell was abroad with an aunt."

"She has returned."

There was another silence. Thorne was evidently expected to say something, but nothing in particular occurred to him. He had seen a photograph, slightly faded and more or less speckled, ornating for four years his companion's dressing-table. It represented the far from prepossessing profile of a schoolgirl in a high-necked black pinafore, with a braid of hair hanging over one shoulder. He remembered that when, on more than one occasion, he had inadvertently glanced toward it, he had regretted his inability to express the slightest commendation. Miss Darrell's very name now seemed to dry up the springs of enthusiasm. This cast over his features a comical distress. His friend must have observed his dilemma, for he laughed more heart-

ily than was his habit. Nevertheless, the laugh once over, gave place to an expression bordering on uneasiness.

"You looked so absurd," he said.

"Thanks. Don't stop; go on, don't mind me."

"You seem to think"

"What in the name of thunder, Darrell, are you driving at?"

"I spoke of my sister. I am worried about her. I hate the old woman she has been traveling with, my father's sister; she's worse than he would be—I mean worse as a guide to an inexperienced girl. She's a perfect baby; knows nothing of the world—Coralie, I mean—and she's an impulsive little girl, and now—"

"Now?"

"She has gone and got herself mixed up with a miserable gutter-snipe of a secretary of legation over there, an Englishman who has already sent his lawyer to look after settlements. I have been making inquiries. I don't like anything I hear about him. He doesn't amount to anything; I guess he never will. He is consumptive, too, or at least his family is. To us these English fortune-hunters seem so effeminate in their attitude toward women. As lovers they are so fussy and feeble. I am quite willing to admit them men in war and sport, but they expect the girls to look after them. Their selfishness is sublime. We like to protect women."

"I'm sure, my dear Darrell, you know I'm all yours if I can do anything to serve you at any time," said Thorne, a trifle stiffly; "but our women seem to enjoy this form of slavery."

"She isn't a bit like that little photo," Darrell went on. "Bless me, where is it? Oh, in the valise! What a wilderness our poor den looks tonight, eh, Hazard? That was taken years ago. She doesn't take well. She is grown up now; she's a dear little girl; I'm awfully fond of her. Hers, at any rate, isn't a slavish mind, and I want her out of this nonsense."

In answer to this somewhat incoherent apostrophe Thorne murmured

that he had no doubt Miss Coralie Darrell was all a brother could desire or deserve, and that he thought photographs were proverbially inadequate. He ended by repeating, "If ever I can serve you, Darrell, you can count on me."

"You can serve me."

"Name the test."

"Cut the Englishman out!"

The words were spoken. Never again could the maiden's name be pronounced between these two in unconsciousness.

"You do me too much honor," said Thorne, with a forced laugh.

"I would give her half my fortune," said Darrell.

II

THORNE emphasized his intention of cutting out the secretary of legation by a year's travel in Europe. The friends kept up a desultory telegraphic correspondence, monosyllabic, unimportant, after the manner of intimate Anglo-Saxons. When he landed in New York on his return, he took up the study of law. In those days the course could be abridged more easily than now. He was admitted to the bar eighteen months later.

Of Darrell he really knew little except that he had bought a ranch in Texas and was amusing himself sheep-shearing. Their letters had left them in darkness as to each other's private affairs. But one day Darrell got tired of his enterprise and took train for New York, deciding that as the Western centre of science, art, commerce and society, it was the only fit place in America for feeling men to inhabit.

"I am going to build a house here to put my books and togs in," he said to Thorne. "It will be pleasant for my little sister to visit." They were dining together at the Union Club, of which Thorne was a member, and at which Darrell was put up for a fortnight, pending more definite recognition.

"Oh, by the way, how did your

sister's love affair end? She isn't married, is she?"

"It didn't end."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. It's still on."

For some unexplained reason Thorne felt annoyed. Such constancy did not accord with his opinions of human conduct.

"What's the matter? Haven't you relented?" he asked, a little ironically.

"I haven't, and what's more to the purpose, my father hasn't."

"Doesn't care to support a member of an effete aristocracy, eh, and that sort of thing?" said Thorne, laughing.

"That's about the size of it."

"And the young lady is sure of her admirer's sincerity? He is sincere, then. I'll bet on an American girl's *flair*."

"I can't make out if she is infatuated or not. Girls are so queer! But he is a sickly sort of a chap, and that, somehow, seems to appeal to her. She thinks we have ill-used him."

"Ah, I see! Pity plays a part."

"She's a good girl."

They drank wine and talked of its flavor, smacking their lips after the manner of youthful connoisseurs.

"Is the—er—young gentleman in America?" asked Thorne, abruptly.

"Not just now; but they correspond."

"Why don't you give the poor little things something to live on and your blessing, if your governor won't? You are awfully hard, Darrell."

His friend's brow darkened.

"Perhaps I am, but I would rather see her in her grave."

"Whew!"

"He may be attached to her now, but in the beginning he was after other things."

"My boy, I know you! I have tested you! Don't put me down, I beg, in that genial category of men who are generous with other people's money. They are the largest-handed fellows in the world. They dispense with regal heartiness. I don't doubt you have the best of reasons."

"I haven't liked his methods; and

as to Coralie's becoming a sick nurse, if you knew her as I do it would amuse you."

Thorne conjured up once more the profile, the pinafore and the hanging braid. They said nothing to him of the butterfly such a chrysalis should hatch.

"She is a wild colt," said Miss Darrell's brother.

The tenderness that could cling to a presumably suffering admirer seemed incongruous with these last descriptive epithets. Thorne began to think he might have done Miss Coralie an injustice. But he asked no further questions. There was much else to say and to hear. He was himself not wholly heart-free at this moment. He had lately been subjected to peculiar trial, and was sore and in need of coddling. He did not bare his soul to Darrell, but told him enough to arouse attention and obtain sympathy. He was on the rebound of a hateful experience that had left an odious taste in his mouth. He had been gulled—an experience peculiarly unpleasant to those whose vanity is accustomed to triumph. *Rience*, the knight, who purled his mantle with the beards of his rivals, did not take kindly, we fancy, to feminine perfidies when directed against himself. Darrell, on his part, had much to recount of that busy life of plain and saddle which has lured so many feckless wights to their disaster.

It was late when, arm in arm, the two sauntered up Fifth Avenue. In those days Fifth street was "up town" and the splendors of the Plaza or the West Side were undeveloped. Glancing up at St. Patrick's Cathedral, still in process of construction, the young men stopped for a moment to speak of the force of that old faith, with its sacerdotal power and enforced obedience.

"It's the only religion for women and the poor," said Thorne.

"What an old-fashioned juxtaposition! Why not women and angels?"

"Late experiments have not served to fortify my belief in feminine wings," said Thorne, drily.

"My dear boy, we must judge *en masse*, and not from individual tests."

"Granted. And the *masse* remains swayed by Catholicity, whose influence we Protestants try in vain to emulate or counteract. It is not enough to study vice and virtue, and prate of them. People *want* to obey, and to gain this submission one must seduce and impress—make a man the puppet of his hope. The Protestant divines seem to lack knowledge of the soul of the crowd—a knowledge that every leader needs."

"Yet Italy and Spain—what do you find there to warrant your assertion that Protestantism fails?"

"Ah, well—nations, like men, must be born, must struggle and rise, then rot and fall. Those old countries but follow out their doom. Religion is at best but a feeble bastion against the fateful tides of the general law of temporal decay and material death. But if the hopes it brings are to be prized, the aspirations treasured, I'm inclined to believe the Romanists have got the right message. Up at my uncle's, on the Hudson, in the villages, the boys and girls bray hymns and blow bellows and eat jam at the meeting-house and at 'sociables,' as they call their church merry-makings, and it has about as much effect on their morals as sweeping cobwebs off the moon."

"And what do you think of the established church and our branch of the Episcopal communion?"

"Always, up there, the church where I go—when I do go—is half-filled on Summer mornings with languid Summer residents, if the day is agreeable and they have no more amusing occupation, and quite empty in Winter of both rich and poor."

"And the Roman Catholic?"

"Is filled to the street with its perspiring believers."

"And you really approve of the confessional?"

"My dear fellow, when a Protestant woman does wrong she tells her husband; when a Roman Catholic does wrong she tells the priest. Women

must tell somebody. In the first instance the complications are far more portentous."

Darrell turned and looked at him narrowly. "I think you are in need of the ministrations of a good woman," he said.

"I think so, too."

The words were spoken low, but with intention. They trudged on in silence under the stars, whose lights were dimmed by the glint of the city's lamps. The same thought crossed both their memories, to find voice in Darrell's ejaculation:

"I once had a wish——"

"I am too poor to marry; and then, I am not worthy."

The smaller man glanced up almost timidly, with that admiration which welled within him but rarely found voice. "I had two affections. Was it an idle dream to want to unite them?"

"But you say the young lady is not fancy-free," said Thorne, a trifle impatiently.

"I have great faith in your powers."

"Pshaw! I can be fooled."

They both laughed.

"Thorne, what are you going to do with yourself?"

"Peg away at the law, make a competence, keep myself from dependence, if it lies in me. I see no further."

"Is it dependence, taking what is useless and turning it over to help humanity?"

"You know what I mean. I must make my own career."

"Do politics attract you?"

"Yes, in our country, where they have the piquancy of the unexpected and their rewards are so uncertain. I should hate the hack harness, such as it exists abroad."

"Then you don't believe in educating diplomats and cabinet ministers?"

"No. Life is the best and only teacher."

"Your point of view is at least interesting."

"My point of view is insignificant. Facts prove these things. Washington was not taught to be what he be-

came, nor Lincoln, nor Hamilton, nor Franklin."

"Then," Darrell exclaimed, with fervor, "I hope to live to see you at the helm!"

Thorne looked down at him from his six feet of altitude and wondered why. Nevertheless, he was touched.

III

LATER, alone in his rooms, smoking at his fireside—it was December and a biting wind frosted the pane—Thorne reflected with renewed amazement on his friend's words. They were so foreign to that reticence which was the keynote of Darrell's character. He felt it must, indeed, be a matter of the gravest importance which could cause him twice, and now after the lapse of years, to deviate from his usual reserve. The transgression was chimerical and quixotic; above all, unusual in an American. It appeared as if the abasement of his pride, even of his sister's, probably dearer than his own, hardly weighed. It is true that the friends at college had tacitly agreed that between them the barriers of custom should be ignored; they had promised each other that mutual frankness without which mutual support remains impossible.

"Were I a Frenchman," said Thorne to himself, while he rolled a fresh cigarette between his thumb and index, "it wouldn't take me very long to accept Darrell's hint—is hint the word? methinks we have an invitation here—and persuade myself that I was desperately in love with the *sorella*, and she dying for me and not for her English suitor. He, by the way, seems a poor enough concern. The beauty of the Latins is that they deceive themselves and actually conjugate the verb *aimer* on the altar of Plutus. This is why they succeed with the ladies."

Then he fell to thinking of what success with the ladies may mean to men, and of the humiliation that had tortured him since he had hurriedly

left the Riviera and taken the first steamer to New York. This episode, which a man more corrupt might have qualified as a success, had filled his soul with unspeakable disgust.

Breakfasting one morning at a hotel in Nice, within sight of the sea, in the company of some American acquaintances, a lady had detached herself from a neighboring group and joined them at their small table. She knew his friends—a married pair and their young daughter—and chatted with them somewhat longer than was accounted for by the interest of topics broached. The least vain of men could hardly have failed to notice that her lingering was at his service and that her great, haughty blue eyes held his own with a peculiar and meaning challenge. His companions named him, but he felt certain, as he rose and bowed, that she had not caught his name. Hers was well known. It was that of a woman of high rank and brilliant prestige in the world of England's most aristocratic life. Lady Eglinton's loveliness, extravagant expenditure and proud disdain were on every tongue, and the aureole of *femme à la mode* was hers beyond question or cavil, with the added solidity of noble lineage and patrician ancestry. She was a very great lady. It was with a curiosity veiled in respect that he met the first summons of that star-like glance. A half-hour afterward, as he prepared to go to his room to get himself ready for an afternoon's yachting, he was surprised to find the lady still loitering at the foot of the main stairway. He paused to let her pass him, but she did not do so, and they went up together.

"Do stop and see my apartments," she said to him; "they are so sunny and nice. I keep them always like a garden, full of flowers and green palms. Do come in and cheer me a bit; I am quite alone."

She explained to him that her little boy and his nurse and her own maid had gone to Cannes to see his grandmamma. She herself unlocked the door, and they went in.

Her apartments were, in fact, very charming, filled, as she had said, with light and bloom. In a cage hanging in the sunshine two young monkeys chattered and tumbled. Lady Eglinton and Thorne stood and watched them a moment, laughing at their gambols.

They talked for a while of indifferent things—America, England, France, of country life in these places and elsewhere, of the last opera, the newest song, a tidbit of Russian Court scandal always to be discovered airing itself on the Riviera, a racy novel, and then—“Are you married?” she asked, in her æolian voice.

“No.”

“Are you free?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean do you care for anybody? Are you in love with any woman?”

“I was not, an hour since,” he answered, huskily. “But why do you ask?”

She did not tell him. Perhaps she could not. She did not herself know.

When they parted she asked him if he met her again the following day to let her take the initiative—it seemed her province—as she might be subjected to peculiar difficulties and must crave his indulgence. She asked him to make no sign, send her no message; she would herself write him a note. That very night she told him she would be surrounded by spies—her family. In which last category Thorne guessed the husband she did not name. Dizzy with his delirium, he promised everything, anything.

Restless, distraught, the following afternoon, having received no word, he sauntered out on the promenade. The sea was bathed in all the glories of the setting sun, but the warmth of the noonday glow seemed to linger on its waters. The circling white gull, the flap of languid sails, the dip of oars, the smells of flowers, all seemed to fill sky, earth and atmosphere with color, melody and perfume.

Suddenly looking up, he saw Lady

Eglinton's swaying form loom before him, advancing in all its elegance and strength. Her long, straight body was caught in a tight-fitting white cloth gown that clung to her as might the peplum to a winged siren of the Patissia. Her high, Roman profile seemed to cut the thin air with its fine pink outline, and the fruit of her red mouth and the dark blue of her glorious eyes dazzled while yet afar. She walked between two gentlemen, one a handsome, blond giant, with ruddy complexion and powerful arms, who for some unexplained reason he felt certain was Lord Eglinton, the other a different type, bronzed, poetic looking, somewhat Byronesque and bored. Toward him Lady Eglinton leaned in eager attention. Thorne was preparing—the poor boy's heart was in his mouth—to raise his hat, when she fixed him with an insolent stare and passed him as she would have done a lackey, with cut direct.

There was not the quiver of an eyelid, the tremor of a telltale lip, the swift Masonic intimation of a recognition charged with its purport of hope or fear.

Nothing.

And again nothing. For she did not send him the line for which his outraged manhood waited twenty-four hours. He left Nice—rage in his soul. To-night he asked himself, for the thousandth time, What did it mean? Why have placed him in that vertiginous abyss, to leave him wallowing in its depths alone? Had it been a dark revenge against a faithless husband or lover, the whim of a cruel and betrayed woman? Or had he pleased her idle fancy for an hour, been the toy of a woman's depraved caprice? She had whistled him to her side, then let him go. The infamous Empress Faustina, beckoning for an instant to a handsome slave boy of the market or lithe gladiator of the arena, could not have cast him from her with more derisive scorn.

All the bitter humiliation of the ignominious rôle that he had played lashed him as with scorpion tongues.

"My God!" he said aloud as he paced his room, "I'd put anything between me and that sort of deviltry. I'd suffer the martyrdom of a lifetime to keep my self-respect; I'd marry the Witch of Endor and be faithful to her, if I thought it would guard me against such tempting! What a craven she must have thought me all the time, and what a fool, if such women think at all! Men are ashamed to own up to spiritual longing, are proud of animalism; yet how difficult the former, how easy the grip of the latter! To possess such a creature as that and not awaken in her one thrill of the soul, not leave in her one regret! And is this what men call a triumph of vanity? Mine was forever killed at Nice. Thus far, Lady Eglinton, I am your debtor."

In lighter moods he would laugh cynically. If one had a singular personality, independent thought, a hot temperament, one must do like Lady Eglinton—have the courage to follow one's originality! He sometimes wondered if he was higher or lower, more heroic or more vulgar, madder or saner than other men, for this entrapment and its escape. All of which proves that the wound, if not eternal, was deep enough.

We must not undervalue ephemeral suffering. Its results are sometimes lasting. Such proved the case with Hazard Thorne's adventure. "The nearer the monkey" of modern scientists, as applied to Lady Eglinton's and his own case, could only heighten its abasement. What belittles the responsibility of ignorance serves but to increase that of insight and education. Of what worth are the refinements if they teach not self-control? He and Lady Eglinton were without excuse.

On the afternoon after his talk with Darrell, Thorne got himself into his frock coat, through the buttonhole of which he introduced the stem of a gardenia flower, as immaculate as certain resolves that he had made. He brushed his arm across his hat, picked up a cane, and reaching the curbstone

hailed a passing cab. He had himself driven to the hotel where Hamilton had told him he would find Miss Darrell.

She was visiting New York to be present at the marriage of a school friend. He found the halls busy with their rush of baggage, travelers, porters, clerks, women, the last overdressed, over-blonde, over-fat, over-fed, loud, gesticulating, blocking doorways, bidding farewells in passages, standing at "lift" gratings—women by the dozen, by the hundred, hurrying or dallying, facile or severe. Among these he picked his way, somewhat stared at, for he belonged to a type at which women look twice. He was tall, he was elegant, he was extremely good-looking, and his gray eyes seemed to express that he was not quite indifferent to the glance of theirs. In fact, he was one of those men who, if they take the trouble, can turn women to slaves or foes, but rarely to sisters or friends.

He was told by the hotel domestic who returned to pilot him that Mrs. Brayton was out, but that Miss Darrell would receive him. He had asked for Mrs. Brayton, who was Miss Darrell's aunt. He was conveyed to the gaunt private drawing-room, highly decorated with gilded plaster and hung with plush portières and gaudily framed mirrors.

Voices in an adjoining room warned him that Miss Darrell was not alone. A smothered laugh intimated that his advent caused commotion. He had, in fact, arrived at a moment most inopportune, unless, indeed, the Fates decree hours and seasons and web the nets of their hidden handicraft in a fashion no mortal man can unravel or elude.

After ten minutes of solitude the door was quickly opened and a young woman appeared on the threshold. She came forward shyly, as if not sure whether to give her hand to the visitor. Her embarrassment was evidenced by a shifting color and an ill-disguised agitation that beat at the bosom of her tightly-fitting cloth gown. She was of medium height, with ir-

regular features, smooth black hair and a pair of frightened eyes.

"Is this Miss Darrell?" said Thorne, smiling, moving to meet her.

"No," said the girl, "my name is Shaw," and, as he remained standing before her, "Won't you sit down?"

They sat down, and an uncomfortable moment followed.

"Is it snowing?" said Miss Shaw.

"Not yet, but a storm seems impending; there is a chill."

It had penetrated between them. Miss Shaw got up and went over to the fire and brandished the poker, with feeble results.

"Let me help you." He took the tongs and propped up a fallen log.

"I am so sorry," she said, turning to him; "Mrs. Brayton, Miss Darrell's aunt, is out shopping, and she, Coralie—Miss Darrell, I mean—is just changing her frock. She begs you will pardon her for keeping you waiting; she will be with us directly."

A crash in the next room announced that agencies of preparation were at work. It painted consternation on Miss Shaw's transparent countenance. There was a sound as of the tray of a trunk thrown on the floor. Another crash, a rush of feet, and then a voice, not quite gently, cried out, "Don't be a fool!"

"Coral—Miss Darrell has a new maid," said Miss Shaw, apologetic, "and she can't find any of her clothes. That is what delays her now, but—"

"But?"

Thorne was amused and conscious of a vaguely awakened curiosity.

"But other things have interfered with her dressing. When you arrived she was in great trouble."

"I am sure I am very sorry to hear that," said Thorne, stiffly, scenting some fresh development of the British complication.

"It is simply dreadful," said Miss Shaw.

"Dear me!" said Thorne.

"She has received letters But I am not at liberty to speak."

"Hamilton has told me something."

"How odd that you should never

have met his sister! You are great friends, are you not, you and Hamilton Darrell?"

Thorne thought it was odd, and also unlucky.

"You may say so. There are not many like her."

"I came this afternoon to mend my ill luck, to force destiny," he said, smiling.

Miss Shaw did not return his smile. She seemed to have little humor and no lightness. But she had a delightful simplicity.

"I adore her," she said.

Thorne murmured that Miss Darrell was fortunate, looking at her friend in the meantime with the indulgence of the man of the world at such enthusiasms.

"Her brother seems very fond of her."

"There is something splendid about her," said Miss Shaw, a little defiantly, as if she remarked and resented Thorne's condescending attitude. "When one is happy," she went on, "one hates to see another miserable."

With this sentiment Thorne agreed.

"That man is perfect putty. I despise him!" This tragically.

"Hamilton tells me he is an invalid."

"That is possible. One would have to put up with it after one was married, but in one's fiance However, I think it is broken."

"A sick lover is, in fact, less pardonable than a sick husband," said Thorne, somewhat sarcastically. "I recognize the woman's distinction."

"Ill or not, he is putty in the hands of his family. We can't understand such things over here."

"A woman had best marry a man who has no near relatives," he said, but with no intention.

This time Miss Shaw laughed, under protest, yet laughed; her grave voice grew almost pretty.

"That is just what I am doing," she said, blushing. "I am glad you approve." She fidgeted in her chair and raised her handkerchief to her mouth.

"Ah! yours is the wedding, then?"
 "Yes; next week. Who *told* you?"
 "Darrell. He said his sister stayed for a marriage."

"We were at school together in Farmington, Coralie and I. She is very clever—very witty, too. She was defending a young fellow only this morning who had been calumniated by a disagreeable old maid. The horrid thing said to her: 'Do men go to your head, Miss Darrell?' 'No, to my feet,' she answered—wasn't that quick? We always have been intimate. She will be my bridesmaid. How I wish she would settle in New York! We both love it. I have to live here now, and I don't know a creature."

"She is a nice sort of girl," he thought, listening to Miss Shaw's prattle, "and her *naïveté* is charming. Miss Darrell's repartee certainly wasn't bad."

He saw Miss Shaw was judging him, and somehow, under the scrutiny of her searching eyes, he felt rather jejune himself, in spite of his pose of *homme du monde*.

Another bang and shuffle in the next room, the rustle of invisible petticoats, a muffled ejaculation, and the door was pushed open with a jerk. Miss Darrell entered.

IV

THE "coltish" quality that Darrell credited to his sister in an indiscreet moment was vividly recalled to Thorne's memory in the shock of their first encounter, for a certain shock there was. They recognized and often spoke of it afterward. Miss Darrell's invasion of her drawing-room was not effected silently. Her personality was of that sort which fills spaces and over flows them. She seemed incommoded with the length of her limbs and her arms, and thus far Darrell's simile to a young horse was happy. Miss Darrell was very tall. Hers was already a commanding presence. "There is something splendid about her" might also express an exuberance of temperament

which found vent in restless movement and superabundant gesture, or hidden forces of character which time and opportunity alone can reveal. Miss Shaw had not explained. There was, in fact, in Miss Darrell's face something arresting and impressive, but it was not the lure or the seal of beauty. At this time she was not handsome, and Thorne, who had instinctive perceptions in such matters, also noticed that she was not becomingly dressed.

"I suppose you are Mr. Thorne," she said, extending her long fingers, "and I must introduce you officially to my friend, Miss Genevieve Shaw. She has no doubt been entertaining you while I tried to get myself together in the clutches of a stupid maid."

Thorne insincerely murmured that the results were satisfying.

She waved his compliment away with a brief "Thanks."

"Genevieve, hasn't my aunt come in?"

"No."

"Where can she be? I hope she hasn't forgotten we must dine early and go to the play with Hamilton tonight. Will Mr. Safford join us, dear?"

"Yes, he promised." Genevieve blushed again.

Miss Darrell leaned forward and pinched her cheek. "You dear little goose!" she said, and laughed.

Her laugh, although agreeable and ringing, was a trifle loud. Thorne did not like women to laugh loud. He thought it bad form. In spite of her laughter, Miss Darrell did not look very merry, and there were suspicious rims about her lids and traces on her cheeks which might indicate recent tears. She had donned a black satin gown too heavily trimmed with colored beads, and on her head was poised a hat topped with too many plumes. The costume was old for her years, and some costly jewels she wore at her throat seemed incongruous to the hour and unsuitable for a young girl. From under the hat there looked out two gray-blue

eyes of singular honesty and courage. Her thick brown hair was carelessly dressed and blew about her wide forehead. Her nose was her best feature—strong, straight, well planted, the nostrils quivering with nervous sensibility. The mouth, large, mirthful when smiling, *triste* in repose, drooped at the corners, as if it might, in moments of ire or resentment, indulge in *la parole amère*. One felt that the ire and the resentment would not be paltry. The complexion inclined to fairness, but was sallow and not very clear. The *tout ensemble* was certainly not pretty, but it was not uninteresting, for the contour of the head, forehead and chin denoted intellectuality and strength. One felt that if Coralie Darrell might sometimes jar on one's taste she would never jar on one's heart. She interested Thorne, she did not charm him. Lady Eglinton had charmed him, and just now he was inclined to view a *charmeuse* as the son of Alcmene might have viewed his Lydian queen after he had escaped her wiles. His senses, always more insidious than fierce, were in that phase which follows violent reaction.

Miss Shaw left them by-and-bye, and he and Miss Darrell sat alone in the gathering gloom together. They talked of Hamilton and their affection for that songless poet, as Thorne called him. He discriminated so wisely her brother's limitations and powers that she concluded it could be no ordinary mind that so gauged merits, motives and character. From Hamilton, Miss Darrell swung to her friend Genevieve—Genevieve Shaw. She had a jerky way with her of springing from subject to subject.

"She is related to the Shaws of Boston," she said, "but she has lived much abroad. She is to be married from her step-mother's house; she has no near relatives. Mrs. Shaw you must have heard of; she married again, a General Lawrence, who is, I think, one of your well-known men."

"He was a gallant soldier, is an orator, and has influence in politics."

"That's the one."

"And on whom does your friend bestow herself?" asked Thorne, somewhat bored.

"She is to be married very quietly next Wednesday to Tom Safford. Have you ever met him?"

Thorne had met the gentleman. "He belongs," he said, "to an old Putnam County family of high respectability; his father was twice in the Legislature; he is himself a rising lawyer."

"What is his social position in New York?" said Miss Darrell.

"He has none, I should say."

Miss Darrell's face fell. "I shouldn't like to marry a man unknown in his town," she said.

"A clever woman can help a man to scale the walls," said Thorne, smiling. "But really, I am not myself a guide to fashion; I have been absent too much myself, and am comparatively a stranger in my own city. Safford is a jovial, pleasant fellow. I should think he would make a capital husband to your friend, who seems to me rather demure."

"She is very much in earnest," said Miss Darrell, "but she is excitable enough. I have sometimes thought her influence over me was unwholesome."

"Are you inclined to be too much in earnest?"

But to this question Miss Darrell vouchsafed no reply.

Outside, the twilight grew apace. Its hush seemed to fill the room. Even the noises of the thoroughfare dwindled with the lighting of the street lamps. The hurrying feet of the passers-by grew fainter and more infrequent. The up-town rush was ebbing, the toilers were turning in for a half-hour before the evening meal and its fresh impetus of rest or recreation. Once or twice Miss Darrell's laugh rang out. Her hand played restively with her bracelets and her rings, her foot impatiently now and again beat the thickly carpeted floor. But on the whole she waxed quieter, and her conversation, from being disconnected and disjointed, became serious and forcible. She talked of

Spain, where she had passed some months; of the Alhambra, Seville, Granada; of Spanish art, of which she longed so much to know more; of Spanish history and literature. Then she told one or two quaint anecdotes of persons met in the chance of travel, and with a color, spirit and raillery which gave Thorne no mean opinion of her humorous intuitions. These salutes were followed by a discussion as to the relative worth of the French modern school of painters as compared with the old masters, in which Thorne was for antiquity and Miss Darrell sounded the note of progress. They parted after an agreeable half-hour or more.

As Thorne buttoned up his coat to face the raw evening, "Something could be made out of that girl," he said to himself. "She is not attractive, exactly—there is much that is crude, ungraceful, unfinished; she is too tall and thin, and her feet are too long, and she laughs too much and too loud; her clothes are too pronounced and she doesn't understand her own style, yet I could fancy it might be worth while to take such a creature in hand and make her over and shape her and tone her down, and surprise one's self and others by creating quite a new young woman. There is something splendid about her—the little friend is right; it is the splendor of goodness—that girl is good, if there is virtue in earth or in heaven. What sweet eyes! How brave and how intelligent! That girl's got grit in her, and she's got sense, too, and fun."

It began to spit frozen rain; the drops whipped his face. He had no umbrella, but evaded them now and again with his hand before his eyes; he turned up his collar. After trudging a mile, as he ran up the steps of his club, "What if I tried?" he said, aloud.

"Ah, Thorne, did you speak to me?" asked an acquaintance who was coming down.

"Hallo, Vincent! Dining out, as usual? You are a professional."

"It is the most infernal nuisance, I can tell you. It's my last Winter of it."

"Why do you go?"

"Why do we wear goloshes in wet weather, or comb our hair, or pay our dues at the club? It's all a part of the damned Philistinism of our blessed nineteenth century existence," the grumbler muttered as he climbed into a hansom.

"Always the same," thought Thorne, smiling.

Warren Vincent was a man of importance in clubs and salons. Thorne looked up to him with peculiar reverence. He was under the spell—a very strong one, in youth—of the other's *cui bono* philosophy. He mistook Vincent's lack of all enthusiasms for Talleyrand's "*Surtout, messieurs, pas de zèle.*" In this particular disciple the injunction bore fruit. Vincent's immunity from all surprises, appreciations, admirations, amounted to genius. Before the glowing works of nature and the industries of man he remained passive. Lonely experiment, sublime meditation, pushing achievement, he sneered or laughed at, and somehow this contempt deluded others into believing that if Vincent only willed it he could move mountains and cast them into the sea, sway empires and destroy worlds. Warren Vincent was, in fact, a man of very mediocre abilities. An inherited fortune saved him from the mortification that failure to earn his living would have cast upon him in a country where this adroitness remains a test of merit. Superficial in culture, without artistic accomplishment, by a great deal of aplomb and impertinence he managed to awe the community into the belief that his criticisms were valuable. Partly assumed and partly constitutional, his lack of warmth was half the result of a low vitality, yet his posturings impressed a coterie chiefly made up of small people.

The cynicism of his countenance had become a habit; it was a cynicism in which there lurked nothing sinister. His smile, to be sure, never rose to gaiety, but for all that it was not ill-natured. He looked like a man who regarded the world as extremely

silly, but who intended to profit by its silliness; he was also capable of showing occasional kindness to the little dogs who crowded about him, wagging their tails at his approach. Too thin-blooded to be revengeful, he ignored enmity with a fine display of indifference. Absolutely unemotional, public stress or private trouble found him calm, collected and dry-pored. His nose was slightly retroussé, and he wore very high shirt collars, that gave his head an appearance of unusual erectness, of being propped up. His arched eyebrows lent superciliousness to his blank stare, while his long, faultlessly fitting frock coat added several inches to his height. Not ill favored, he was called handsome; ordinary in attainment and efficiency, he was considered clever. Clever he undoubtedly was, with that form of cleverness which knocks down and never constructs. A sway it undoubtedly possesses; but this is generally brief. In middle life such men sink to insignificance, in old age to oblivion. Eventually one wearies of the unproductive, of the hens that cackle and lay no eggs. From august they become ridiculous. Just now he was still young, and his amiable pessimisms and dissatisfactions were thought to be amusing. Society craves to be amused rather than instructed or benefited—besides which, he really had a taste for house decoration and some knowledge of rare bric-à-brac, which rendered him acceptable to the ladies.

“What if I tried!” To his Hudson River relatives Thorne knew Miss Darrell would appear “Western”—that vague term of reproach whose principal definition springs from variations played on the letter “r.” How many pretty fancies and sweet love dreams has that “r” dispelled!

Genevieve Shaw remained to sleep at the hotel. These last few days of girlish communion were very precious to the friends whom congeniality of mind and mutual loneliness drew together in tender ties of confi-

While Mrs. Brayton was dis-

robing her opulent charms in her apartments across the passage, the girls indulged in one of those nocturnal chats so dear to women, and in which the eccentricities and tergiversations of the other sex are so ruthlessly laid bare. Coralie Darrell sat on the edge of her bed; she was already in her nightdress. Over her shoulders she held her opera wrap, with its fluff of white fur about the throat; her naked feet, thrust into satin mules, dangled to the floor. Sunk in a low chair, facing her, Miss Shaw—still dressed—was loosening the coils of her heavy, braided hair. She was listening to her friend with a tremulous, almost painful attention.

“What did you think of him?” Coralie was saying.

“His eyes are fascinating.”

“Pshaw! I mean of the man himself.”

“Aren’t eyes the windows through which we hide or peep?”

“I don’t know; they can lie.”

“Dear, why so distrustful?”

“You ask!”

Genevieve sighed. “I thought him very much of a gentleman, distinguished.”

“I want your opinion, because the instant I saw that man I knew he was—my husband.”

“Coralie!” Genevieve’s eyes widened with their amazement.

“Hush! Yes, it is written. It will be best.” And as her friend continued to gaze at her, speechless, transfixed, as if alarmed at some sign of impending madness, she said, “Don’t stare at me so. I will explain; you must understand. I want your help. The other thing is over, over forever; between it and me I wish to place an irremediable barrier. You know what happened to-day; you saw those letters; we had just read them when Mr. Thorne came in. I could overlook the cruelty of his mother’s note, bidding me stop playing fast and loose with her son, and telling me how unwelcome I should be in her household. The other letter, the one from that girl he was engaged to and threw over

for my sake, affected me more. But that, too, I could have ignored, with its insulting taunt that it was my money he coveted and that his heart was still her own. All could have been borne if I *believed*. But at last, at last, very late, my pride has awakened, my soul has revolted, my energy is broken. He has not stood by me as he should. I see it now. My people are right. I am in the wrong. Hamilton was right. And, by the bye, it is I, not Arthur, that have been played with; it is I, not he, that have been crushed!"

"But—Mr. Thorne!" gasped Genevieve, clasping her hands across her knees.

"Mr. Thorne! He has come in time. They shall see what I am made of. Oh, I might have wished that Arthur Penfold should love me enough to claim me without a penny, but if I marry to please my brother, he can keep his word; he can give me the money. I'll take it; I'll take the fortune; I'll not put another man to any tests; I'll come well dowered." She spoke bitterly and drew her cloak closely about her breast. "Well—where was I? There isn't anything more to say, is there, Genevieve? I forget—where was I?"

"Mr. Thorne . . . and—"

"You said the word—he is a gentleman. That is what I must marry, a gentleman; that is what I liked in Arthur, his breeding." The tears fell from her wide-open eyes and trickled on her hands. "My life, Genevieve, has been, since mamma died, a hell. Aunt Elise, Mrs. Brayton, is kind, but so antagonistic to me I often hate her. When she crosses the floor, when she laughs or coughs, I want to wring her neck. And I am forced to be near her for months and months. These nervous idiosyncrasies are so hard to conquer. I blame myself, but what will you have? *C'est plus fort que moi*. Those whom God has set asunder let no man put together. Papa, you know, is entirely engrossed with his aims and ends and speculations, filling our house with men a girl should never meet, lavishing lux-

uries on me one day and the next bidding me prepare for ruin—he has driven Hamilton from our home, and he will me. I loathe my life; I cannot, I will not, return and take it up again. Marriage is my only escape, my only excuse for leaving it. It suits papa well enough to have me there. Well, Mr. Thorne—Hamilton has talked of him to me. He is devoted to him. Do you know, the moment that man entered I felt—we know such things—that I affected him, that he was studying me, that he liked me, that I should have the opportunity of marrying him, that Hamilton would be pleased, that he was—my husband." The tears still rained upon her hands.

"How extraordinary! But are you sure it isn't *pique*?"

"I am sure of nothing. Don't let's analyze; my feelings won't bear it. Toward Arthur there is no *pique*; toward his family, yes, perhaps a little. One is human. A poor sufferer, for whom his people are too strong! Oh, a weakling, I'll admit it; but so dear, so dear!"

"What, still?" Genevieve spoke in a frightened whisper.

"Listen. Don't abuse him to me, I couldn't stand it—not yet, not yet. But one thing, Genevieve, I can promise you. If I go into this thing it will be loyally and pluckily. I am not base and I know the worth of a contract; I will keep mine. If I marry Hamilton's friend I will be a true wife to him."

"But you don't know the man."

"I shall know him."

"But he isn't even attentive to you yet," said Genevieve, shaking her head a little impatiently.

"He will be attentive." Coralie dabbed a handkerchief across her face and laughed a laugh not entirely devoid of merriment.

"Ah, Coralie, what a creature you are! So inconsequent, so impulsive! Are you not afraid?"

"Ah, little Genevieve, the worst having happened to me, what should I fear? Who knows? perhaps life may still be full of promise. At any rate,

it shall not conquer me. I am not weak."

"No, that you are not."

"Fancy anyone living with papa who was! He has got to meet iron to strike his will and whims against, poor papa! He is fond of me, all the same, in his own queer way. And I am like him in many things, hopeful and buoyant. We belong to the sanguines, but I have more concentration of purpose. I wanted your advice. I have lost faith in my own opinions, in my judgment of character. One doesn't want to make a second mistake. Did you like him? Do you think he will get on? I am ambitious now. Health is not enough this time."

"The responsibility you put on me is too tremendous—a man I have seen five minutes! He is certainly delightful in appearance and manner, and seems clever."

"That will do. Now, dearest, let us talk of yourself. Tell me about Tom—he fairly radiates—and all the details of *the day*. Aunt Elise says your veil is the most splendid she ever saw, and she knows—a contrast to me, who can't tell tatting from *point de Venise*."

V

THE wooing was brief. Its outcome left the chief participants as breathless as the outside world. Ten days later Coralie said to Thorne, "Yes, I'll marry you, on one condition."

"And that is?" he asked, quickly.

"That you marry me to-morrow, without any announcement or engagement, in some church we shall pass in our promenade."

Here was a being evidently emancipated from common convention and yet of whose innocence one could have no shadow of a doubt. Thorne was delighted. The "wedding"—always a *corvée* to the male, and borne with as much grace as a pet sheep carries its blue ribbons and jingling bells—thus summarily dispensed with, lent to his marriage an unusual savor. He was an odd mixture of

geniality and ungregariousness, being the kind of man who, in certain moods, will walk a mile out of his path not to meet his best friend. He was not only delighted, he said so, and added something warmer that made her look up gratefully. Her wounded heart longed for kindness.

"She is enchanting," he said to Darrell; "so artless and so womanly."

"She is a good girl," said Hamilton, with a huskiness in his voice as he pressed Hazard's hand.

She had told Thorne frankly of her former love affair and of its ending. She concealed nothing. He saw in it a scratch, no more, that would heal swiftly under the sunshine of a new tenderness. He meant to be tender. He felt within himself wells of unspent affection.

Darrell was elected to give her away, and her aunt and Tom Safford stood at her side. Her father, from a mining town in Texas, wired consent and blessings. On their return from their short wedding trip she was hurried up the Hudson and duly embraced and ratified by aunts, uncles and cousins. Before this final sanction Hamilton had handed her the deeds of a fine house in the Fifth Avenue and other deeds for other houses, and assigned to her securities in mining stocks, and bonds and mortgages and many things of which she knew but little, to the amount of a million dollars. This transfer—the rumor of which sped quickly—no doubt mitigated the "Western" aroma that Thorne feared his kindred would detect in his young bride. They expressed themselves satisfied with his choice, commended his excellent taste, and took dear Coralie to their fond hearts. She, on her side, admired the forgotten gentlemen in their manorial dwellings, the serenity of their prosaic calm, the aristocratic seclusion of their environment. As the traveler is impressed by the sombrero and cloak of the *hidalgo* as "so deliciously Spanish and picturesque, don't you know," so she found these people ravishingly quaint. She listened, not without a certain

measure of respect, to their egotistic chatter as they dwelt on the legends of their former superiority to the vulgar herd that dominate New York to-day. She was not indifferent to the accident of birth. She reminded them with spirit that if her father was a self-made man, her mother was of gentle blood.

"You must not be shocked, my dear Mrs. Thorne," she said to the aunt who had sent Hazard to Harvard, "if I am not like other girls. Mamma died when I was thirteen, and I have been my own mistress and far too independent ever since. I long for guidance."

"I like her," said this lady afterward to her lord; "she needs toning down, I admit, but she is perfectly refined in everything, and I find her full of character and intelligence. She is clever, and mark my words, Alfred, by-and-bye she will be a handsome woman; that sort needs maturity."

"She will have to make haste, then; she's hardly up to Hazard in looks now."

Alfred Thorne could not escape the conviction that his nephew conferred an honor on Miss Darrell in giving her his hand.

"He's immensely lucky, and the sooner you tell him so the better," retorted his wife.

"Hem . . . hem."

"Why, they'd have jumped at her abroad, an heiress——"

"The Thornes, my dear, never jumped at anything. You know our motto, 'I wait.' "

"I tell you they have waited until the grass has grown up to their ears. I am glad we have no children. If Lester—" Lester was Hazard's other uncle—"and Amanda sit still much longer they can whistle for husbands for their girls till they're hoarse, and not get half a one. Husbands nowadays aren't going to spring down girls' throats. Your nieces should have been properly presented. Eleanna is getting quite old looking."

"Eleanna is a mighty pretty young woman," said her uncle, testily.

"There are signs of age women

can conceal from men, but never from one another. But I am thought peculiar," went on Mrs. Alfred. "Well, Hazard, at any rate, who was my boy, has shown some gumption. I should like them to take some sort of a position. It is little enough we can do to help his wife in the city."

"Position! What! with Mrs. Clyde and Mrs. Larremore and Mount Cuthbert, whose father was a drayman, leaders of the dance! What a distinction! They are well out of it."

"I am not talking about distinction. The Darrell tree is new enough, but I have generally noticed that people who were too good to marry the new rich ended by marrying the new poor. They are young and want a little fun; who's to give it to them? Our old-fogy cousins in Bond street, or Rebecca Varick at her whist parties on Second avenue, or the Van der Voorts in their back parlor, with their chicken-salad Sunday teas? My dear Alfred, you're moss-grown. We are antiquities—respectable, but obsolete. Let the birdlings build their nest on a new bough; ours is toppling and rotten at the root, and—" as Mr. Thorne raised a white hand in protest, standing with his back to the fire, in his comfortable dressing-gown and flowered waistcoat—"I shall advise Coralie to be catholic—to extend her lists, to widen her influence; it will be better for Hazard's profession. Look at that clock, my dear," she pointed to an ancient timepiece; "an inveterate liar, an hour and a half behind time; there we are! It doesn't matter here, where there is nothing to do, but in the world one must keep up to the minutes."

She walked to the window and looked out, leaving her husband to digest her words. An immense silence hung over the landscape, gray, dense and sad under its vapor of snow. The river, frozen here and there in patches, frowned between the ice-floes in deep pools of hidden water; the trees that concealed the banks, under which the hated railroad sped, loomed bare and tall against the lead-

en-sky. Nature's eternal repetitions were the chief breaks in the monotony of existence. Sometimes Mrs. Thorne had found them pale. She turned back to the luxurious warmth and color of the room with a slight shiver and sigh. "Let the birdlings build their nest," she repeated under her breath, but her husband did not heed her. It was the hour of his nap, when he rested from doing nothing. He was already stretched at length on his well-worn sofa and snoring lustily. She stopped, and with the force of habit, threw a shawl across his feet, then stood and looked down for a moment at his once finely cut and handsome features, dulled and thickened by cramped aims and small achievements, and so looking, sighed again.

The Hazard Thones built their nest in the big house that Darrell gave his sister as a portion of her dower.

"I hear," said Mr. Atherton to Warren Vincent, "that Hazard Thorne has struck oil—or a Western heiress—and moved into a palace."

"Car?"

Atherton laughed. "The Pullman carriages are at least easy and comfortable."

"When one is not writhing at their ornamentations. They affect my liver. Thorne's drawing-room has all the plush indecencies and barbarous equivocations of the drawing-room palace car at its worst."

"They will learn."

"Perhaps. I doubt it. Madame has not a vestige of what the French women call the art of installation."

"American women are wonderful—she will learn," repeated Atherton. "I hear she is clever."

"What good will that do her?"

"It will keep her going. Beauty gives the start, but brains keep up the pace. A beautiful, stupid woman is done for at twenty-five; a fairly pretty and clever one still reigns at forty."

"That depends."

"Exactly. It depends on her use of her cleverness. I mean the woman

who employs her wit to some purpose, who makes the most of herself, her attractions and her opportunities. The silly ones go to pieces; the clever ones know how to harbor their forces, retain their physical loveliness, enhance and make it valuable, and bend chance to will. They understand that the social career, like any other, must have a meaning; that a campaign is not a succession of disconnected maneuvers, wild and inconsequent, but that to every move there must be concerted plan and purpose, else it's doomed to final failure. Occasional pyrotechnics are not sufficient. There must be *suite dans les idées.*"

"Get out a manual, Atherton, and I'll invest in a copy for Mrs. Thorne," said Vincent, with that dry laugh which somehow even the well-seasoned Atherton found disagreeable, yet did not know exactly how to resent. "She'll need it."

Atherton lighted his cigar and turned on his heel with a sense that his homily had been ill-timed, overheated and a trifle prolix. It was this faculty of belittling others which made of Warren Vincent a power in his set. A small power in a small set, yet Dumas *fil* tells us "a little success proves a great talent."

Such as it was the nest was builded, moved into and became a home. Our young married people sat down in it to make each other's acquaintance. There seemed little danger of interruption; they found themselves practically alone.

Genevieve Shaw, now Mrs. Safford, lived very near, in one of the numerous numbered streets that cross the avenues. Darrell bought himself a house next door. Apertures in the wall of the different stories made the houses one. This connection might be useful in case of entertainment. He usually ate with them. Just now, entertainments did not seem expedient, as there was nobody to entertain. They had a good cook, and bachelors were sometimes invited to dine. Among them, Warren Vincent was a frequent guest. He liked the admiration he inspired in his host and

the secret hostility he guessed in his hostess. It piqued his vanity. Mrs. Safford and her husband often joined them, and of course there were a few other women, some married couples, an occasional girl. These belonged to no particular coterie, but were culled from a variety of sources—sometimes were travelers from other cities, country relatives, Western potentates. This incongruous *melange* was a source of constant amusement to Vincent, who could trone among them to his complete satisfaction, striking terror to their simple hearts. His visits were not without profit to young Mrs. Thorne. Much as he annoyed her, she had to admit his knowledge in matters of furnishing and bric-a-brac.

"Isn't that a dear little cabinet?" she once said to him, exhibiting the latest purchase that adorned her graceless, stiff boudoir. She sat here of an afternoon because her brother and her husband told her she ought to enjoy it.

"Ah!" said Warren, adjusting his monocle, "modern."

"It didn't pose for an antique," she answered, vexed at being vexed. She had seen the thing in a shop window and did not like to acknowledge she had gone in and paid the price and ordered it sent home without a query.

"I am not so sure," said Vincent; "the imitation is admirable, but it's imitation. What did they make you pay?"

She named the sum.

"I thought as much. They have passed it off for the real thing; they have cheated you badly."

Mrs. Thorne hung her head.

He went on, not unkindly, and gave her a lesson on this particular cabinet which, with many other lessons she was learning, she never forgot. Her memory was retentive.

Another time he was a less good genius; in fact, she thought him an evil influence in her husband's path, but bore with him, as brides do with their husband's friends, resignedly, in the desire to be dutiful. Hazard liked him, and she would not banish a solace

from his evening after a busy day. For he worked hard and his practice grew apace. On this one occasion, however, she felt that Vincent's ice-cold judgment did her wrong. They had been to a ball. An occasional ball, like an occasional horseback ride, leaves pains in the joints. This particular ball was not, in young Mrs. Thorne's opinion, a happy venture. Rather indifferent as to her clothes, she had been accustomed to allow her aunt to dress her, with more or less, generally less, felicity. Now, unused to the perfidy of New York mantua-makers, she neglected to order her gown in time. It came home, casually, the night of the dance. This *soirée* was a subscription one, but *à la mode*. The frock, a light green tulle with ivy leaves and silver, pretty enough on some girlish, plump blonde, was eminently unsuitable and unbecoming to Mrs. Thorne's tall tenuity. It was found to be a trifle short and somewhat too *décolleté*. There was no time for alteration. She decided she would not dance and that a convenient fan could be held up before her bosom. The disadvantages were not as marked, once in the ballroom, as before she left the gaping curiosity of her own maids, for everybody else seemed very much uncovered, and she passed unnoticed. As nobody asked her to dance, she sat most of the evening. Her husband did not like her gown, and told her so. He regretted her first appearance should not be more propitiously accomplished, and was cross and even quite angry with—the dressmaker. This did not raise his wife's spirits. He himself had a poor time of it. He was mortified to find himself so much of a stranger in his own city; he also noticed that the women had ceased to look at him. This made him smile and assure himself that he did not care. He was very glad that he did not care. He repeated this to himself several times during the evening. But it is not of this ball we would speak. Early the next day he was surprised, when he left the breakfast table, to find Coralie fully equipped for a walk, standing in the hall. She

kept the French custom of coffee in her bedroom, and he rarely saw her, except for a word of greeting at her door, until he returned from his office in the afternoon.

"Why! You up at this hour?"

"I must get that party out of my bones," she said, laughing, "and out of my head. I want to walk it off before my singing lesson."

"Well, I must be off. I have got a lot of important papers to look over which I brought up last night and did not even open. The men who dined here didn't give me the time to get at them, between dinner and the party. By the way, dear, scold that dress-maker; she did not half do you justice. I like you better in white. Why don't you wear white? I think black velvet would suit you, with your pearls."

As he spoke he fumbled for the documents, found them on the hall table, put them in his ulster pocket, and in a moment was in his hansom cab. She heard him throw the driver the address of a neighboring hotel where he sometimes stopped to send early telegrams. As he drove off she saw that two or three loose sheets had detached themselves from his package and fluttered to the sidewalk. She turned to the butler, who blocked the vestibule, with the instinct to bid him follow his master, but the man's bare head, slippers and helpless stupidity struck her as necessarily delaying. Before she formulated her command she had herself taken the field, or rather, the street. She grabbed the papers, and rushed down the slushy pavement in hot pursuit of her husband's cab. It turned the corner just ahead of her. The novelty of the exercise, the uncertainty of the chase, intoxicated her and seemed to give her wings. On she flew, slipping, tripping, but righting herself, her hat shifting a little toward one ear, one braid of her hair detaching itself at her *nuque*, heedless of appearance, careless of comment, speeding after the hansom, which obstacles of the thoroughfare kept just within her sight. At last—

the distance shortened. She caught up with it as her husband sprang to the curb.

She could not speak at first, but held out the lost papers, gradually recovering her breath. "I thought you—would want them," she panted. "You said you—they were important . . ."

"And you ran through the mud after me all the way to bring them!" he said, looking at her with a sudden great reverence surging within him. He took her outstretched fingers in his own. "My dear, that was a lovely impulse."

She was flushed and disheveled, but it gave her childish pleasure to have won the race, and she was prouder of the exploit than of its motive. "I knew I could do it!" she cried; "I have such long legs. They did me service this time."

"It was simply sweet," he went on, looking into her eyes, "and I wish I could kiss you, but I will . . . your hand." As he spoke he stooped and pressed his lips an instant on Coralie's wrist, and Coralie, poor child, felt happy for the first time since her marriage. A laugh startled them. Warren Vincent came out of the hotel.

Coralie's action was one of those of which a man is proud or ashamed, according to his power of discernment. What was highest in Thorne's nature was deeply touched. It was a trivial thing, no doubt, but one of those marks of devotion and unselfishness which subtle minds know how to value. "It was an exquisite thing to do," he thought.

Vincent took off his hat and stood beside them. Something in his aspect dampened them both. By mutual consent they dropped each other's hands and stepped quickly apart.

"You are out early, Mrs. Thorne," he said, "for a lady I saw at two o'clock at Delmonico's. I am sure all the other women who were there are fast asleep. New York great ladies are so indolent."

As he spoke in his quiet voice she became suddenly conscious that her

skirt was bedraggled, her hat awry, her hair pendent, her boots not improved by the run through the blackening mud. A defiant feeling possessed her that she needed no defense for what Thorne had praised.

"I ran after Hazard's cab to give him some letters he had forgotten," she said, boldly.

"I was at the *coiffeur's* window and saw your arrival," said Vincent, with his cold smile. "I was greatly interested."

"Charmed that I furnished you entertainment," she said, haughtily. "Good-bye, Hazard," and she left them.

Thorne moved as if to follow her, but somehow the charm was broken. Vincent passed his arm through his.

"Come, walk down; it will do you good."

"Very well—" he dismissed his cab—"I will, as far as Tenth street. Wait while I wire a couple of messages."

As they walked along Vincent said: "Your wife ought to go out more."

"We are strangers."

"Nonsense! you, a Thorne."

"An unknown Thorne, and you know it." He felt a vague anger rising in his heart against his companion—he hardly knew why.

"What's the matter?"

"We are not successes."

"My dear fellow, it's your own fault. You ought to coach her."

"Look here, Vincent; what do you mean by that?"

"I mean, how can she be a success and do this—er—sort of thing?"

"I don't understand you."

"Why, you should tell her that what did very well for—Peoria—or what was the name of the place?—won't go down here. If she wants to be a success she's got to stop running after her hubby, and you'll have to stop abetting it. Besides, your tall women should not agitate themselves. Their style is repose."

"If you don't want to get your nose pulled you had better stop!" said Thorne, glaring at him. "I don't discuss Mrs. Thorne with you. One

more word on your part will be one too many."

"My dear boy, pray, pardon me; I was entirely in jest, as I thought you were. Here is Tenth street, and I'll leave you and hail this cab. Here, fellow, take me to Broad street. Good-bye; I meant no offense," and he drove off.

Thorne's exaltation had fallen. It was for this he could not forgive Vincent. It is cruel to be pulled down from heights. "The devil take his impudence!" he said to himself. But try as he would, he could not reclimb to the elevation from which he had, for a moment, looked into his young wife's soul.

VI

MRS. HEATHCOTE, who was the mistress of a sumptuous town house, a luxurious villa at Newport and a charming country place on Long Island, was driving up Fifth Avenue. Just because she possessed all these things and the finest and smartest of equipages, as well as many wonderful gowns, she chose to run about half the day in a cloth dress and toque, and to be driving now with her husband in the most dilapidated and rickety of cabs.

When a moment's blockade brought their humble curriole to a standstill under the wheels, as it were, of a resplendent victoria bright with gilded harness and highly groomed horses, "Who in the world are your friends in those wild hats?" she said to her husband.

Colonel Heathcote, glancing out to see what mishap impeded progress, was bowing to two ladies. "I was presented to those two women at the last 'Patriarch,' just as I was escaping the supper. If you hadn't had a headache and stopped at home, you'd have been offered up, too."

"Fancy! Were they there? How mixed those subscription affairs are getting!"

"Do you see the one on this side?"

"She's got a nice face; she looks

clever and amusing, in spite of her awful get-up."

"Well, that is Hazard Thorne's young wife, and you talk of 'mixed!' Why, when my father was a boy, Mrs. Harry Thorne was the leader of everything. It was sufficient she should show at a party to make it the fashion, while the Thorne boys were the idols of the young nobs, and their models."

"Yes, of course. Mamma was full of those traditions of the Hazards and Thornes, but this—girl?"

"The daughter of John Y. Darrell."

"What, the big bug out West?"

"The same."

"She looks it."

"Nonsense!"

"Do you know, Reginald, I *like* her. She would be pretty if . . ."

The victoria trembled and freed itself; the shambling cab fell into line behind it.

"And the other one?"

"The other one is Tom Safford's wife. I know him very well down town; a good fellow."

"A gentleman?"

"Yes, of course."

"I never heard of him."

"They are not New Yorkers."

"What a circus of strangers is invading us!"

Mrs. Safford was saying to her friend, "There's that Colonel Heathcote Mr. Vincent introduced to us."

"Which way? Ah, yes! Can that be his wife? I have heard so much of her I was dying to see her. What a lovely woman, and so simple; and look at their turnout!" Both laughed. The simplicity of elegant women was still a surprise to Coralie. In her own city, position was defined by splendor.

"That would delight Joseph Turtle."

"Is he still ranting against luxury?"

"Oh, yes; I have ceased to pay attention. It would seem that extremes meet—Joseph and Mrs. Heathcote exploiting the same ideas!"

"She has a charming face; she must be superb in the evening."

"I have always heard her toilettes raved over. To-day she is dressed like a maid."

"She doesn't look like one."

"No. More like a goddess incog., stooping to earth for a moment's distraction from the tedium of Olympus. When she looked at me I felt like an over-bedecked Jewess."

"Those women—it doesn't matter what they wear or do—always seem to be—right," sighed Genevieve.

"And we—wrong," said Coralie, laughing heartily.

She laughed again still more gaily with her husband and Darrell at the dinner hour. "Mr. Vincent was so scandalized at my matutinal scramble through the streets after Hazard!" she said to her brother, as she sipped her *consommé*.

Darrell gave out his grave smile. He was superlatively happy, warming himself in the rays of what he called his two affections. He was proud of his handiwork and as pleased with his match-making as any Gallic dowager who has unearthed two good *partis* and thrown them into each other's arms. Manlike, he penetrated little into the undercurrent whose surfaces appeared so calm. "I warned Thorne once you were a colt, but it's time you were put into traces."

"You should have seen his nose," went on Coralie, "two inches longer than usual. He considers me hopeless."

"Vincent can make himself deucedly disagreeable when he chooses," said Thorne, in whom the unpleasant encounter with the gentleman in question still rankled.

"He is a sybarite," said Darrell. "We have few such in this country. I, for one, am willing they should fill their niche; they wish to see that we fill ours."

"That is just it," said Thorne; "they always want to interfere, to give lessons."

"Vincent is rather a silent man, is he not?" said Darrell.

"His silences are terrible," said Coralie. "I have learned to dread them more than his utterances; they are less direct, but invariably mean more profound disapproval."

Thorne felt annoyed that she should

assume this attitude of needing a mentor. "Why don't you snub him?"

She opened wide pupils. "Why don't you?"

"I do."

Then, being a woman, she said, as if addressing the air:

"Oh, I thought he was *persona grata*. I'm sure I don't want him here. I detest him!"

Something in her tone irritated Thorne. He frowned.

"He is certainly less odious than your friend Turtle. He is at least —"

"Now, Hazard," she said, "don't say gentleman, for Joseph is that, isn't he, Hamilton?"

"Yes, I think he is," said her brother, "a gentleman in his innocence."

"He is an infernal bore, at any rate," said Mr. Thorne.

"Poor dear! He isn't very intelligent, but he is reverent."

"Reverent?" said Darrell.

"Yes. He believed my cabinet was an antique, and worshipped it as such, whereas Mr. Vincent knocked the bottom right out of it and of all my illusions; said I had been robbed, if not murdered."

Thorne always liked her fun, and applauded it now by a swift dissipation of his moment's ill-humor. "Well, if you can bear with that man, I'm willing; you are more patient than I am."

"Oh, my dear, I'm accustomed to being bored; I have learned patience. If you only had seen some of papa's friends, eh, Hamilton? Mr. Sperry, for instance, or Canova. We used to call one of our visitors Canova because he once asked me if a copy of Michael Angelo's 'David' was not 'sculpted'—yes, that is the way he called it—by the same man who did the 'Cupid and Psyche' in our hall. 'He was a kind of an all-round man, now wasn't he?' he asked. Hamilton, don't look so—I am telling the truth."

She was a good mimic, and illustrated her spirited stories with amusing imitations.

Joseph Turtle was a slab-sided, long-haired, smooth-faced individual whom the chance of affairs carried back and forth like a leaf in a storm between Ogonia—where Mr. Darrell *père* had his country estates—and New York. He was a native of the former place, a son of the village physician. He had played with the Darrell children when a child, and always remained with them on terms of friendly familiarity. He called Mrs. Thorne Coralie, with robust pressure on the *al*, and Darrell, "Ham." Mrs. Thorne was one of those honest women who dislike to discard old friends—the genus is almost extinct. She welcomed him, therefore, in her New York home, but she did not make a tragic virtue of this hospitality. She did not look upon it as a work of supererogation. "I must know whom the Ogonia people marry, and what they die of," she said to her husband. "Leave me my Turtle. He is my last link with the old days. Papa never writes, he telegraphs, and then only three words." Perhaps in this new existence, where much that she did and said seemed to strike discord, she was grateful for the presence of one in whose eyes she knew that she could not err. For, the petted and spoiled darling of her father's house and of her warm-hearted neighbors, she was unused to criticism. Now and then, when she remembered her girlhood, her eyes filmed and her voice faltered, although she had left Ogonia without regret. But Mr. Thorne did not fancy Turtle. He was, in fact, a difficult person to fancy.

"He is an acquired taste," Coralie used to say. "Wait until you've been regaled on him, as I have, for twenty years, and you'll become a victim to the habit."

It was not about Turtle, however, but about Warren Vincent that they had their first serious dissension. And here once more Thorne's equanimity was disturbed at a certain clash between his own and his wife's judgment.

Coralie had a way of scribbling

down impressions, keeping a species of record, less of facts than of the people whom she met, their peculiarities and personal characteristics. As she never showed these to her husband, he could not guess their genius. He would have recognized it, for he did not underrate her powers. She, on the contrary, sometimes impatient of his conservative views of conduct and modes of thought, was perhaps inclined to depreciate his.

One day, looking over some pages she had written, they seemed to her so well done that she felt them worthy of publication. Always impulsive, she tore them from her journal, and sent them by mail, unsigned and thinly veiled with dexterous changes of names and seasons, to the *Ogona Sentinel*. The bit was only a description of a New York drawing-room in which a type of person resembling Warren Vincent was made to play the principal part. His appearance, manner, gestures, methods of speech, were rendered with absolute fidelity, and at the same time whipped with mordant irony. *Ogona* was so insignificant a town that, had the article been dull, it would have gone no farther; but it was brilliant, and distinctly a hit. The editor was no fool. He ran it through his sheet, then sent it cityward. It was copied from paper to paper, blazed through the country, and reached New York—at last. “From the *Ogona Sentinel*” was more betraying than would have been the open signature, *Coralie Darrell Thorne*. It was read in the clubs and commented upon. Vincent read it, and, what was more unfortunate, Thorne. He recognized his wife's hand instantly. It is not too much to say that he was very angry. Vincent was their frequent guest, was a man of dignified position, of assured standing, accepted on the footing of friendship. He deemed the offense heinous and ineffaceable. He came home, with the paper into which his wife's squib was transcribed in his pocket, burning with indignation. He rebuked her for her indiscretion somewhat hotly. She retorted

that she could not know it would go farther than the limits of her province, and that, after all, types were types endlessly repeated. They belonged to authors—were public property. Would Vincent read it? So much the better. If her husband desired it, she would read it aloud to him at his next visit. She said this and many other foolish things, and tossed her head as only young women do who are profoundly humiliated.

Later Genevieve was the recipient of her confidence. Ah, how often she had wept on her friend's shoulder! For under *Coralie's* laughter there were tears. Never had she been less happy than in the first years of her married life. Her soul was desperately sad. Genevieve Safford alone knew its secret struggles. No time of her brief youth was so unhappy to her as these first months, for, only a few weeks after his dismissal and her marriage, her English lover did the worst thing he could have done for Hazard Thorne. He died. Dying, he was very cruel; he left a letter for her. In it he blamed her heartlessness, upbraided her faithlessness, told her she had dealt the death thrust; that he had loved her; that she should have waited. Was he honest? Perhaps. At any rate, her heart was wrung, and it was only through constant abnegation and self-immolation that she could bring herself to fill the rôle she had imposed on herself. She cursed the folly that had driven her into such hasty ties, and was as miserable as can be a girl not much past twenty who thinks that she has killed the man who loved her. Genevieve, who was the worst adviser possible, gave her a sympathy at once inexperienced and a trifle ponderous. She fanned her remorse.

Is it a wonder, then, that *Coralie* was no “success?” She grew, indeed, pallid and thin.

It is very well for fables and proverbs to insist that the most ineffectual creature that is alive is of more importance than a dead lion. A dead lover is a dangerous rival to a living husband in an im-

agation of twenty-three. After she had sobbed out her quarrel with her husband, baptizing Mrs. Safford's velvet cape and broidered bodice with her tears, she felt inclined to believe that Arthur Penfold had every virtue and Hazard Thorne but a scant apanage. "He doesn't understand me in the least," she cried, "and yet—and yet, if he only knew how hard I have tried to please him, through all—through all!"

"He does know, he does see, dearest," cooed Genevieve, kissing her hair; "but you are an impulsive creature and he a man of the world, and so"

"Oh, I hate their world! Perhaps I shall not be in it long."

Genevieve drew her to a warm embrace. "Hush, darling, what should I do?" She knew Coralie spoke of an impending hour when life and death throw dice for victory.

"Ah, I should have died and followed Arthur long ago if it hadn't been for you, dear Genevieve."

"Why, my darling, you are unjust to your husband; he loves you, he—"

"Does he? He won't give up that horrid man to please me, and now—"

"A man! Why, just think if it were a woman!" whispered Genevieve.

"Oh, he never looks at women; there's nothing like that."

"Well, that is a good deal."

"Fancy! Why, Genevieve, you are getting cynical and suspicious. No, he is quite absorbed in his career, in spite of his dilettante, *dolce far niente* manner."

"A very attractive manner."

"Yes, he is attractive, and I have ambitions for him."

"And for yourself?"

"And for myself. Not puerile ambitions; mine are colossal."

"To what do you aspire?" said Genevieve, smiling.

"It is still inchoate, but I should not like obscurity." Then, after a moment, "It is well he doesn't care about other women; I am jealous."

"What! really?"

"Yes."

"Were you jealous of Arthur Penfold?"

"Yes."

"I never imagined such a thing of you."

"Oh, my dear, you don't know me yet."

"I think you were wrong to show up your husband's friend."

"I did not reflect."

"And you know he never did like Mr. Turtle," said Genevieve, who had no humor, shaking her head.

"Joseph is so forlorn," said Coralie, laughing through her tears, "so lonely and so devoted to me, the one chain with my past. How can I throw him over? I know his name is funny and he is not very swell, but it would just break his heart if I were nasty to him."

"But isn't it more important to suit your husband?" said Genevieve, with astuteness, yet secretly enjoying, as timid women do, the rashness of another's speech.

"I am not a weakling, Genevieve," said Coralie, sitting up again and straightening out her disarray; "I am not what my brother Hamilton calls 'a scatterer.' I have moved heaven and earth to conceal what I have suffered from my husband, and he thinks that Penfold's death was a mere prick to memory, no more. I am devoted to his interests. I shall be so to his child's. Why, I am studying law to keep up with him, and the best paper he wrote for his last case I prepared for him. Don't think me ungrateful for much that I appreciate, but I was born to be unhappy."

Is this true of some of us? Are there beings, indeed, as the astrologists insist, doomed from their birth to suffer, on whom Saturn or the moon has cast a ray of gloom and danger? Coralie nestled like a bird to her friend's arm.

"I have been faithless, and am punished! I am envious of your joy, dear," she went on, after a moment's silence. "My marriage is not con-

genial, like yours, but I did not deserve it."

"Ah, you poison mine when you say that," cried Genevieve. "Such words seem ominous of evil." She had not believed in the Englishman, but felt her impotence before the pathetic silence of the dead, which none can cope with. Her dark eyes gleamed with terror, and she caught the young woman to her heart.

"Perhaps my little one will bring me cheer," said Coralie, more lightly. "Don't fret about me, dear; you will make yourself ill. You are quite white."

"I do fret. I am alone so much. Tom is so occupied. You are all of my day when he is absent."

"My daughter shall be Genevieve—I know it is a girl. I shall have my sorrow—bring a woman child into the world."

His wife's pallor, languor, restlessness, Thorne attributed to her condition, as was natural. But notwithstanding dark forebodings, Mrs. Thorne's ordeal was as easy as is the Indian woman's who stops under a tree to bring her baby into life and picks it up and trudges on her way. And it was a rosy little morsel of flesh, and lusty and dimpled and merry. Genevieve, or Viva, as she was nicknamed, indeed filled the house with the *bravura* of her sorceries.

Three years later their son was born. They named him Hamilton Darrell.

VII

"Our house is hideous!" Thorne said to Vincent, when they sat smoking alone late one evening in the library. "What the devil's the matter with it?"

In the present evolution of sex, when there is a perceptible *rapprochement* in aims, pursuits and accoutrements, it has possibly escaped casual observers that just as women grow more masculine, men have a tendency to—femalize. The helpless male of fifty years ago, who couldn't get his

dinner well cooked or his rooms properly heated, or his clothes brushed, or his esthetic propensities developed without the aid of woman, is fast disappearing. Men's clubs, run by men, supplied by men, valeted by men, are proverbially better kept than private establishments.

It is now possible, nay, probable, that the master's apartments will be quite as dainty and well ordered as my lady's; while he is fidgety about his bed-hangings, crotchety about his picture frames, and devotes much time and expenditure to the setting of his chimney-piece, the period of his clocks and the authenticity of his majolica. The private homes of modern bachelors of fortune are museums, labyrinthian and intricate receptacles for objects of the highest artistic excellence, whose lack of utility is counterbalanced by their grace. They are, generally, also cozy nests of comfort, peculiarly adapted to the pretty fencing of love and gallantry. A woman finds to-day in her lover or her husband not a defenseless wight played upon by tradesmen, hungry, cold, shelterless and shabby unless ministered to by her succoring care, but a teacher, critic and coadjutor. In the matter of frescoes, dadoes, dinner decorations, and even of dresses, bonnets and the trinkets that go to make up the up-to-date *élégante*, he knows as much as she.

While not belonging quite to the new era, Thorne, always fastidious in his dress, was possessed of sufficient knowledge to be made uncomfortable by all forms of ugliness. He knew just enough to be dissatisfied with his installation, yet not enough to remedy its glaring insufficiency. Vincent's silence proved to him that he was not alone in his opinion.

"What the devil's the matter with it?"

Vincent emitted a pale ring of smoke from between his lips and pulled up his high shirt collar with a jerk.

"There's too much upholstery," he said, laconically. "It's too plushy and buttoned in, and over-carpeted

and over-chandeliered, and that sort of thing. Thank God, light is coming to us; it'll be time enough when this Renaissance is settled, has shaken down on us, to do it all over. The contents of this room, for instance, with its wainscoting and huge mantel, are out of all proportion to its size. These things would have looked well at Chambord or Chatsworth; they are absurd in these narrow quarters."

"I'll be hanged if I let my wife give parties until we have done it over. Poor girl! she's as disappointed with the results as I am."

Vincent was again silent. He had not forgotten a certain muddy morning. Perhaps there were matters of more recent date he did not forget. If, however, he bore his friend's wife any grudge for her literary pasquade, he was too Machiavellian to set the fool's cap on his own head. He had met the article—the Thornes began to doubt if he had read it—with an inscrutable indifference. Thorne felt grateful, Mrs. Thorne puzzled. To her ardent and frank nature, open resentment would have been more comprehensible. Sweetly kind-hearted, she had deeply regretted her action, regretted it in sackcloth and ashes, and was ready to offer any amends to one she might have hurt. How could she imagine it would ever be copied! Equally unexplainable to her was the chilling but exquisite politeness with which Vincent met in her drawing-rooms, sometimes at her dinner table, Mr. Joseph Turtle, of Ognia.

These civilities, it must be admitted, were repaid with slight gratitude. If at their first encounter Vincent had secretly repelled Mrs. Thorne, to Joseph Turtle he seemed to be the proverbial red flannel petticoat that incites the flagitious enterprise of the roving bull. The grandson of a Methodist bishop, Joseph had been brought up in the unquestioning faith of a sturdy puritanism that accepts no compromise, asks no indulgence. If in the crucible of his father's—the doctor's—scientific experiments he had left some dogmatic

tenets with a good deal of their Christian charity, he had not lost their sustaining prejudices. Like nearly all men brought up within provincial limitations, great cities, and particularly their social evolution, oppressed him. He was offended at their wickedness. He saw little else. Men like Vincent, who have opinions in art and only tastes in morals, represented to him the dangerous outcome of a false civilization. Yet there are men who are kept moral by their taste! He feared for Coralie the insidious poison of such an atmosphere.

"She's a trump," he would say to himself, "but she's in a nest of asps here. I don't see how she'll escape their contamination."

With a view to forestall and prevent any such decadence on the part of his old friend—he was several years her senior, but he had frolicked with her in her childhood—he was never weary of inveighing against the hollowness and frivolity of people of fashion—the emptiness of their minds and hardness of their hearts. In truth, he knew nothing whatever about them. The decorative side of life—so important to refinement—is harshly and unjustly judged by outsiders who cannot gauge its significance. They refuse to see that the same brain and the same heart exist in every sphere under every garb. A man of the world does not entertain you with a detailed record of his child's illness, his wife's symptoms, his sister's unhappy marriage or his depleted bank account; he leaves his household gods at home. The ingenuous hind, accustomed to the belief that the details of his existence can be of importance to others, mistakes this reserve, the dwelling only on the ephemeral and lighter side of life, as a proof that cares are slighted and responsibilities shirked. Superficial in his way, he does not notice that this exterior is but the down on the fruit—the golden dust on the butterfly's wing; that this brilliant surface is not the synthesis of a whole existence. In his simplicity he does not understand that the ex-

ternal flutter is not all; that there are deep unrest, battles bravely fought, duties met, sorrows borne, and even arduous intellectual labors accomplished under the feathers and the flippancy of opera, ball and street. To him the woman with bare shoulders must be immodest, the man whose clothes fit well a fop or a fool. He cannot realize that there are people to whom the revealing of the hidden stress of life is as immodest and far more foolish than the trick of tailor or modiste, that these very people whom he severely censures hold many things too sacred to parade with which he makes his conversation ring, and that when all is said there is a form of egotism which the salon has wisely banished.

To Mr. Turtle's diatribes Vincent invariably lent a courteous and attentive ear. But the study of his features at such moments was so amusing to Coralie that she could not resist turning her eyes in his direction to see the mixture of contempt and wonder which they expressed.

This attention and this urbanity of conduct, so belied by his countenance, would gradually have upon the unfortunate Turtle that curious disintegrating effect it had on others. He would flush and stammer uneasily, fume on his chair, finally become involved and incoherent in speech, tumble to pieces, as it were, and sit glowering, emitting now and then a growl like a giant held at bay. For a young giant he was. Six feet four in height, of enormous breadth, strong as a steer, he sat huddled in his corner, a very epitome of unspent force. He was indeed a picturesque figure for a New York drawing-room, with the freshness of his complexion, rosy and white as a sucking pig's, his long upper lip, virgin of mustache and razor, his prominent nose and the length of his straight hair. His Titanesque body was usually arrayed in black broadcloth, which hung about it in limp folds. His long, pink hands swung at his sides like paddles, while his enormous feet were shod in thick-soled boots of Ogonia make and

Ogonia mould. When he dined or passed the evening with his New York friends he was nearly always on his way to a night train, so that his much worn, stained traveling-bag was deposited in the vestibule, where it never failed to arouse the risibility and jeers of the menservants; the vindictive pleasure of laughing at "the quality," when it fails to assert itself by elegance or expenditure, being one of the perquisites of service. Owing to these frequent journeys, he rarely appeared in a dress suit, Mrs. Thorne kindly waiving ceremony for his convenience. This dereliction annoyed Thorne, who considered the traveler's carelessness a mark of extreme ill-breeding, and who found Turtle insupportable in any costume. The latter continued to come, however, and thus became, at intervals, an *habitué* of the house.

Thorne did not enter on marriage in a gust of excitement, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. If this last injunction is excessive, we will say the fear of—himself. The wholesome fear of one's self is an incentive as well as a safeguard. Did this ægis under which he had put himself in a moment of self-distrust sometimes weigh on him a trifle heavily? I think not. In justice to himself it may be said that Miss Darrell's gifts of fortune, while they had made his marriage possible—he could not have invited her to poverty—had weighed but slightly in his decision. Its motives were high; he met them valiantly. Too proud to bear dependence, he immediately set to work to better his own fortunes, and found the means engrossing. He liked the law; the ease of his circumstances permitted him to choose such branches of it as suited his aptitudes and talents. He realized that the influence of his wife's humorous, keen and philosophic mind made her companionship stimulating. It was certainly never dull. He felt with her sometimes that strange sensation of shaking off old bigotries in the

birth of new truths. She swept away cobwebs. Her freshness and originality vivified. Hamilton's proximity, his children, sufficed to fill his days. Entire sympathy between himself and Coralie he did not look for; he concluded it was best to do without it cheerfully. He vaguely regretted her lack of artistic skill in their *intérieur*, and also her failure to assert herself socially. Of course, the misunderstanding about the squib blew over, although she refused, with a woman's wilfulness, to show a proper measure of contrition. It went with those other frets and misunderstandings that prove organizations and ideas at variance. Nevertheless, he looked up to and respected her; while she gave him repeated proofs of an unselfish devotion. The lack of entire comprehension between them caused him to throw himself more warmly into the activities of his profession. In these outside ambitions she was his help-meet, lending her time and attention to his pursuits. So passed fifteen years, not all unhappily.

In the re-decorated dining-room, which pleased Coralie, and was in fact improved, dinners were sometimes given. Some acquaintances, of course, were made. There was a whist club, an occasional ball; while just above their heads there danced and pirouetted a set of gayer people, rarely met, and only in those crowded, official gatherings where the lines of social demarcation are extended.

There were visits to the aunts and uncles on the Hudson, the solicitudes of fatherhood and motherhood, the purchase of a country estate on Long Island. Ere we close this record of their earlier experience one word must be spoken of their first sorrow.

Little Viva was a ray of sunlight; Hamilton, her brother, a beam of moonlight. "Where is Tony?" was the first word of his father on returning from his office in the late afternoon; "Bring me Tony!" the exclamation of his awakening. And oh, the joyous antics, the shouts of glee, the breathless fun! What a roaring

of bears and tomahawking of Indian chiefs, and puss-in-the-corner, and cat's-cradle for quieter moments, when papa was tired or had a headache. Coralie would come to the door in her *peignoir* and look in at them—at the handsome man and the exquisite child—so rapt in one another, and her heart would swell with pride at the thought, "I am the mother of that perfect creature!" And perfect he was! His glorious eyes were like two stars; his little cheeks were pale with that divine pallor of childhood which holds no suggestion of ill-health; his dark curls grew low on his broad forehead; his nose was chiseled like a cameo; his lips were dewy and scarlet; his little teeth were white and even, and his breath was like violets after the rain. When at play he was full of the maddest mischief; yet for all that he was serious and thoughtful beyond his years.

Viva was always laughing and merry, with her amber curls and dimpled cheeks, but Tony was, in repose, full of dignity. "I was thinking," he used to say, when his uncle asked him why he was so quiet.

Viva had a pretty Skye terrier called Folly, which used to yap and bark at her heels. This pet accompanied the children on their daily walks.

When Hamilton was about nine years old, one day, as they came home, a huge bulldog sprang from a neighboring yard, and unprovoked, planted its teeth in Folly's throat. Gurgling with terror, the pet turned supplicating eyes to its young mistress. She screamed and covered her face.

Tony, with frantic courage, rushed in between the combatants, fell on the brute and tore Folly from him, but not before the angry creature's jaw closed on his hand. A policeman came to the rescue. The animal was shot in the street.

When his mother came home, an hour later, the nurse and maids told her the story. Aghast and alarmed,

she asked if they had instantly sent for a doctor, or rather, taken the child to one. They had sent for the family physician. He had not yet arrived. She hurried to the nursery. Hamilton was playing ball with his sister, smiling and bright. She examined his hand. A dark purple spot where the blood clotted alone marred its transparent whiteness. She bundled him into her brougham and hurried to the nearest physician.

In a few minutes the wound, not larger than a ten-cent piece, was cauterized and dressed.

"I think you have no cause for anxiety," said the doctor, answering kindly the fixity of her searching gaze.

She did not like to say much before the boy.

"We have such cases daily, and never hear of them again. All goes well."

When they returned the family doctor was waiting in the hall. Another examination was made and all found rightly done.

Thorne and Darrell both remembered they had been bitten by dogs in their childhood. They talked cheerfully to Coralie.

She, too, was cheerful—terribly cheerful. One thing she refused—to send and find out if the killed dog had signs of—No, it was simply impossible.

We are incapable of pushing certain hypotheses. The realization of our terrors would be too atrocious.

Six weeks passed. The child seemed in blooming health. They tacitly ceased to speak of it, the trio who watched him, although they furtively outwitted each other in their sleepless vigilance.

Calm was almost restored. Six weeks is a long time—or is it short? They did not know. One morning, at the noonday meal, as the butler handed her son some meat, Coralie saw him pale.

"What is the *matter* with you?" she said.

She spoke in a voice that the child thought angry.

"Drink your milk!" she commanded, with parched tongue; "drink do you *hear* me?"

He took a few gulps.

"Well, how does it taste?"

Her fingers fell on his brown ones as they put down the glass.

"I don't know why, mamma, I don't seem to feel very hungry today."

"Are you not . . . *thirsty*?" she said, with glazed eyes on his.

"Not very," said the child, with a faint smile. "I feel a little sick at my stomach, mamma."

"Drink more milk," she said. "It'll cure you; *drink* it, do you hear me?"

The little fellow took up the glass once more. She felt as if her mind were wandering, lost in the illusions of some dreadful delirium.

Her husband, somewhat indisposed, had not gone down into the city. He was in his library. She went in.

"Hazard," she said.

"Well?"

But he knew when he saw her face. She came over to him. Their eyes met in mute misery.

"He *drank*," she said, "but wouldn't eat."

Thorne's lips left his teeth suddenly uncovered, like an animal's in pain, in a wan effort at a smile.

"My poor girl, you are frightening yourself unnecessarily, if he drank—"

"Send for the physician. I forced him to drink. It has come!"

She sat down, clasping her hands across her knees. "My lamb! my lamb! my lamb!" she moaned. "Why did I not see the red mark of doom on your white shoulder!"

The next day, while Darrell and the physicians conferred in inaudible whispers, their heads bent together in a corner of the room, two tall forms, with hands linked, leaned over the cot. His thin boy's arms drew them down close, close together to the pillow. His face looked already wise and old—sad like a man's who has solved all the knowledge of the terrible anguish of life. His voice hurt them. There

was authority in it—something they would never forget.

"Mamma, pray for me! Papa, pray for me! Mamma, pray! It's coming again, it's coming!"

That awful "it"—with the convulsed eyeball, the limb's contortion, the writhing lip leaving its fleck of foam on the counterpane!

When their darling was at rest—the slim, white body quiet, the waxen hands so strangely rigid, the lids fallen on those beautiful eyes forever—Hazard Thorne fell down at his wife's feet. Hiding his head on her knees, he sobbed out all his manhood's sorrow.

His cry rang through the night.

"Tony! Tony!"

He had once punished him in the last year; only once—had refused to take him for a promised drive because of some childish misdemeanor.

"I didn't take him!" he cried; "I didn't take him! I can see his little face at the window as I drove off. He was disappointed. I had promised. I went without him. I left him. Tony, forgive! Tony, forgive! Oh, my God!"

She soothed him with soft words, caressing his hair.

Her own eyes were tearless.

PART SECOND

I

CORALIE had told Mrs. Safford that she was ambitious.

When Thorne ran for Congress she proved her words. That distinguished British canvasser, the wife of Devonshire, could not have organized a more sweeping campaign than did this daughter of the West. The executive ability inherited from her father served her now. No obstacle was too great, no exertion too wearisome for her to undertake. Thorne was a Republican. His township and his county were Democratic, but there were other counties, one of which was certain, others wavering. The struggle would be close, therefore absor-

ing. There existed at this time an agitation in the village, the hamlet that nestled close to the fine estate of the new nominee.

It was the question of removal of a certain dock in a certain creek where the sand schooners came to load. The dock was old and unsightly. Two or three Summer residents insisted that its contiguity infested their private beaches with marauders, also that it marred their view. On the other hand, to the villagers this spot was consecrated by long habit to the uses of their principal trade. Its removal farther up the creek, whose current was swift and which was crossed by a bar of sand, would, at low tide, greatly inconvenience the incoming barges. The question had, at the moment of Thorne's campaign, grown into a tilt between the rich and the poor, and promised to play no small part in his canvass as it swelled to the dimensions of a political dispute.

The local lawyers, covered with documents, sat in the antechambers of the candidate, or waylaid him with petitions and expostulations on his lawn; and all the while the creek, with the insouciance of nature to human affairs, slept under its dumb shadows, while the barges went in and out.

Culture dislikes vehemence. Thorne was tired of the subject. Coralie, who herself had none of the patience that springs from indolence, was called on, nevertheless, to sacrifice herself. She relieved him of these interviews by listening to the slow-tongued arguments that tracked her to the garden and pursued her to the shore. She became entirely converted to the popular demand. She felt that if her husband was to carry his own township he must respect the prejudices of its humbler inhabitants.

There was a little lady whose grounds grazed the creek's border, however, who had caused to be sent about a paper in favor of the innovation. Many powerful names were already affixed to it, and she waited to emphasize a direct attack when she

should find Mr. Thorne alone and at her mercy. Returning from the city by a late train one warm Summer night, she and Thorne—except for a sleeping business man or two—were the only occupants of the drawing-room car. Mrs. Farnham's bright eyes were quick to seize the propitious opportunity. She moved from her chair and seated herself just in front of Thorne.

It would have been difficult to say of Mrs. Farnham that she was this or that, because she was always changing. She eagerly desired to detach herself—to be somebody—but she had never yet been able to determine what special rôle suited her best. All success dazzled her. She longed to soar. She was not scrupulous as to the means, only she did not always find that her imitation of successful people brought her to their levels. A superficial mimicry of other people's faults or virtues does not teach their force. One may divorce one's Josephine and break her heart without becoming a Napoleon; debauch one's moral conscience and not write Verlaine's poetry; send money to lepers without reaching the heights of a Father Damien. Mrs. Farnham was sometimes discouraged to find that her best efforts remained sterile, and wondered why. Even when, for a brief season, she taught in Sunday-school she failed to impress others with her sanctity; in fact, her aureole, like the discontented man's in Paradise, was found not to fit. The imitator's fantastic travesties lack the energetic and powerful conceptions that render master minds remarkable. Where convictions are unstable they are fruitless.

Here, at her very door, was a chance to become a political woman. Coralie's achievement filled her soul with envy. She therefore led the opposition.

"One forgets people who come to one's parties, but never those who don't," she said, laughingly, to Hazard. "You never come to ours, and so you are always in my thought."

Thorne murmured the excuse of pressing occupations.

"Oh, I know," said Mrs. Farnham. "I often ask myself why the frumps one invites never have occupations or headaches. They always come, while the desired are so hard to get."

Thorne, like the average man, was not insensible to flattery. Mrs. Farnham was so extremely pretty! One wondered why, with her small feet and hands, perfect ankles and wrists, refined features and every mark of race, she remained hopelessly plebeian. "Past prayer," Mrs. Heathcote said. And there were people who felt the touch of those tiny, pink finger-tips to be unpleasant—like the contact of antennæ, probing, never compassionate. She had none of the delicacy of heart which understands the hearts of others. Her social talent was vulgar. Nevertheless, she had a quaintness in disposing of her own sex, to their disparagement, which entertained the gentlemen. A man's attack on men alarms women, a woman's on women amuses men. She was also one of those ladies who think all husbands superior to their wives—except their own.

Thorne, bored all day in ill-smelling corridors and tobacco-stained lobbies, drew in now with a certain pleasure the perfume of her dainty personality. Perfectly gloved and booted, faintly scented with orris and heliotrope, magnetic currents seemed to flow from her yellow hair. One must not ask too much. A sudden egotistic sentiment led him to feel how pleasant patronage might be—that gift of office whose dream destroys more souls than it selects and saves. He liked to think this charming woman depended on him, looked up to him, hung on his words. He bantered and parleyed with the fair enemy. He was gallant. He lent a willing ear to her importunities and took notes of them. He was pliant, half-yielding.

These weak moments, common to all men, the reaction from grinding cares, brought to Mrs. Farnham one of the few triumphs of her abortive

ambition. For the next two weeks she followed up her advantage.

The flirtation was harmless enough; but Coralie was aghast to find her husband vacillating. Her representations went for nothing. He finally decided that the change at the creek would greatly enhance the value of property. Was he sincere? At any rate, he sided with his own class. When the great day waned, it was found that this defection had lost him his own town. By a close shave, however, and his wife's superhuman exertions, he carried the county. He was returned to Congress with an insignificant majority, at first contested. But in the end he got in. So Coralie, in the flush of victory, forgave him. There was no smallness in her valiant soul. Of Mrs. Farnham's part in the business she knew nothing. Thorne considered it too insignificant to mention. But facts that determine action are never trivial. Their influences are the revealers of character.

They went, of course, to live in Washington. A large house, on a sunlit circle, to which a wing was added, was bought and furnished. And now Warren Vincent, who came to pass a week of their early instalment—Coralie weakly admitted to her husband that she wished him to see she had learned the difference between the antique and the modern—even Vincent could find little fault. The best architects and decorators had been employed, and this time to some purpose. The florist added his quota of talent. The conservatory blossomed and the boudoir budded. It was all handsome and in good taste. In the matter of toilette, too, Coralie had improved. She now thought it worth while to study the questions of fashion. She wished to advance her husband politically through her hospitalities. A well-dressed woman is sure of herself. She ordered very smart gowns indeed, and wore them with greater enthusiasm.

In New York she had not been a success. Too young for the chaperon's dais, too indifferent to dance and flirt,

without those instigations of vanity which make society the rendezvous of gallantry and intrigue, New York, on the whole, bored her.

She felt no expectant thrill in climbing, no ecstasy at reaching the top. The jealousies and animosities of rival leaders, the so-called "exclusives" who put up their shutters one day and battered down their walls the next, the chatter of women's luncheons and the tedium of heavy banquets wearied her insufferably. When rarely bidden to the daintier feasts that reporters do not record, she usually felt herself somewhat of an outsider. "I go from out, in; they go from in, out," she said to Genevieve Safford. "We don't meet. They are all intimate. They blackguard each other. They are dreadfully polite to me—as polite as we are to the man who wants to marry us and we don't want. Only love's free-masonry makes one capricious and tyrannical and rude. Love can afford it."

"Ah! you are too clever for them, dear," Mrs. Safford would reply.

"Nonsense! they are far cleverer. I haven't the grip. I am not *chic*, and there you have it."

But the Capital was different. Here were a wider field, larger topics, an emulation whose prizes seemed less frivolous, more variety—the Representatives, the Senators with their wives and daughters, the Cabinet, the White House. There was the handful of fashionable women who entertained New Yorkers and the diplomatic Corps, spent their "season" in London, married their girls to peers and princes, and were detested by the descendants of the Colonial residents.

She opened her doors. To her they all came. She became popular. When, two years later, Thorne went to the Senate, their entertainments were the most talked of in Washington. Mrs. Hazard Thorne's place was assured.

She enjoyed it hugely. It was all new and odd, and her sense of humor found ample aliment. She was pleased

at her husband's indubitable prowess, proud of his ascendancy, full of zeal; and she gave the warmest interest to the development of her young daughter, Viva, a comely and gifted girl.

Mrs. Safford came now and again to pass some weeks with her. Their friendship remained. Coralie was too honest to discard the affections and companionships of her past, even Joseph Turtle's. Impoverished by an unfortunate business venture, he had captured, through Coralie's influence with the Administration, the Persian mission.

He sent her his photograph from his distant post, as he appeared at his first presentation, in a high hat, dress coat and bare feet. Its grotesqueness was the source of much merry laughter.

The city, designed while Washington was President, when our public men were endowed with prophetic foresight, planned by the same French engineers who remodeled Paris, delighted her. She liked to lose herself in its labyrinthian network of streets and radial avenues, in its Mall, its parks and squares and gardens, to gaze up at the white-winged dignity of the Capitol, with its enshrining historic vision, to loiter in the lonely pathways of the Soldiers' Home or gaze from the heights of melancholy Arlington, amid its memories of heroes, across the misty banks of the Potomac. So she was happy.

II

At this time there were two women swimming on "the great third wave" of Washington society—in other words, who were watched and discussed, admired and despised, loved and hated—who were important. One was a foreigner, the wife of a minister, a Greek princess by birth. She had been whipped through poverty into marrying an elderly diplomat, who adored her, and whom she recklessly and persistently rendered ridiculous.

She was about thirty and very beautiful. Socrates insists virtue cannot be taught. At whatever well Hélène de Mossig had drunk her early draughts of knowledge, the springs of wisdom and discretion had been dry. A creature of whim, swayed by violent and ardent caprice, unexplained attractions and unaccountable aversions. Vain and sensual, without ambitions except those of personal gratification, not intellectual, scarcely intelligent, she possessed some quality that attracted men, even those who judged her severely. Madame de Mossig was not modern. She was content to be a woman. The weapons she wielded were those of sex. It is these that have forced the inequalities of Latin legislation—those distrustful laws that count a woman as a dangerous little beast who must be beaten and crushed. Always surrounded by admirers, principally young secretaries of legation, Coralie had wittily christened her court the "de Mossig attachés."

The refined masculinity of figure of the tall, straight American girl—with her narrow chest and hips, her falling shoulders, her thin throat—who has practiced high kicking, can lift her foot to the level of her head, and jump from her own height without hurting herself, was not hers. Her full bosom, her undulating movements, her languid manner, made of her a creature all fire and danger. A fire and danger, however, that did not touch the deeper fibres of the soul. She was of the earth, earthy, and as such she was very good. Indeed, she could not be called a wicked woman, if the strength of sin is the law; for she knew no law save that of her own wilful fancy. She was not malicious, and she was not what women call "cattie." This negative tribute may, at least, be thrown into the balance of her meagre moral luggage.

The lady who disputed with Madame de Mossig—though with but slight endeavor of her own—the palm of social notoriety was of a distinctly different type. She was an American.

In her veins a mixture of Southern and New England blood lent a healthy blend of nonchalance and enterprise. Less regularly beautiful than the Greek, she possessed a harmony of person which, in its highest form, is never an acquisition, but a gift—the dower of an engaging personality. Conscious struggle for ease is without result; too many more important things are sacrificed.

Mrs. Arden made none of those elephantine efforts to be charming which interfere with the comfort of onlookers. She was simply born so. It was somewhat strange that neither of these women, so fitted to the frame of luxury, possessed wealth. The minister's wife lived and received with simplicity. Leah Arden was poor. She was separated from a hopelessly dissipated and impecunious husband, who was never kind to her except after ill-using her. Of an even and amiable temper, she had borne with his vagaries until her family, fearing for her safety, interfered. They arranged a *modus vivendi*—apart. No decree of divorce was procured. "I am neither fish, flesh nor fowl," she used to say, laughing. "But at least I have got back my peace."

She lived in a tiny house in an unfashionable street, with her mother and a couple of maids. She never invited anybody to anything but a cup of tea—even to this but a chosen few. Nevertheless, no dinner party, no dance, no cavalcade in early Spring to country tryst or rally-hunt, was thought complete without her presence. Mrs. Arden was, in fact, one of those women peculiarly fitted for out-of-door amusements, which seemed to enhance her Hebe-like bloom. It was, indeed, very different from the hectic, feverish note of Madame de Mossig's loveliness, which was at best in lighted drawing-rooms.

The rival beauties had each her own particular followers and trumpeters. Yet they were not enemies. There even existed between them a considerable display of feminine friendliness, until there came be-

tween them that mischievous perturber of such alliances—the man!

As the representative of a minor court, Madame de Mossig's place at banquets, if not "below the salt," was not always at the host's right hand. She was more apt to be flanked by a member of the Cabinet or a Congressman than by an ambassador. She never quarreled with the fact when chance or choice—for she ended by frankly naming to her hostess her favorite cavalier—brought her shoulder to shoulder with the handsome New York Senator.

Thorne had improved rather than deteriorated in personal equipment since we first made his acquaintance. The vanished roundness and smoothness of youth left his features chiseled, as it were, into a new and indefinable distinction, while the sorrow of his son's death—that one inconsolable misfortune—and the common vicissitudes of all existence gave them greater sweetness. His had been none of those experiences that trace the marks of bitterness and dig the furrows of discontent. He had known one great grief, hardly anguish. The first is simple and clear, and must be bowed to; into the second enter the elements of uncertainty and of conflict. No cancerous envy drained the generosities of his judgments, no paltry makeshifts his purse. The furtive skulking of dishonor never even brushed him. He always walked erect where others have to crouch. His hair, now swept with gray, had lost none of its silky thickness. His step was as agile, his eye as piercing, as when he had been jostled at football in his college days or wrestled in the gymnasium for prizes of athletic skill. His spareness had taken on that weight of the middle years which sometimes turns angularity to elegance. He was always well dressed.

What was wanting to him? When he searched the recesses of his being he sometimes asked himself, what, indeed? Yet somehow Thorne had a dim conviction that happiness had passed him by. One profound expe-

rience, which every creature dare expect, had not been his. He knew that he had never entirely loved a woman. He believed, with frank modesty, that none had ever entirely loved him. His few "successes" with the other sex had left on him, on the whole, a disagreeable impression. He had now long been too absorbed in his career to give to women more than a passing glance. This may have sprung as much from apathy as from any distinct determination of absolute loyalty to his wife. His attachment to her was sincere and serious. Sympathetic to him she was not. He philosophically concluded that in escaping the meshes of passion he had escaped their pain. And he tried to feel extremely grateful.

Now, all at once, to his amusement first, later to his dismay, he found himself the selected target for Madame de Mossig's assaults of coquetry. But coquetry with her was no mere game. She lacked the discipline of the accomplished flirt. And the *toquade* that Thorne excited in her at their first introduction grew in a few short weeks to an infatuation that she was at no pains to conceal or deny.

The compliments he paid to her, with the happy tranquillity of his incontestable charm, an accidental walk or two, one bouquet, one drive in his T-cart through country lanes, were enough. When he saw what he had done, his alarmed attitude of reserve finished the work. What would have discouraged a delicate nature whetted her coarser one. She was one of those women whom obstacles fret to madness. Against his will he found himself pursued by another will with a challenge bordering on impudence.

He woke for the first time to the realization of what such power over another might mean. Madame de Mossig was admirably beautiful, and she was his slave. On the whole, in one of those situations that even a Saint Anthony might have found disturbing, he conducted himself with honor. It may be said that it was made easier to him because he was

not in the least enamored of the lady. To be desired may be disquieting, it is hardly enticing to a man of Thorne's temperamental dignity. He felt that he was only less absurd than the unfortunate husband, who was sometimes called on to minister to his wife's hysterics. A scene she made at a dinner at the British Legation, when she found that Thorne was not to be her neighbor, but Mrs. Arden's—toward whom she now developed a furious dislike—forced him to almost brutal measures. Thorne had no wish to have his privacy invaded by curious eyes and tattling tongues. His whispered words so carelessly uttered in the days of their dawning acquaintance had really borne too wild a fruit. He became sick of the whole affair—disgusted. He also knew that in America such scrapes have clipped the wings of more than one political eagle. Whatever a man's resources may be, it is difficult for him to escape from such a trap without offering to the woman actual insult. But he managed to escape.

The de Mossigs left for Virginia; he and Coralie, during the recess of Congress, for a brief European tour.

This would have been the end of the whole matter had not an occurrence the following Winter given fresh impetus to gossip. Madame de Mossig, who had been ten years childless, gave birth to a son.

III

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Farnham, who, through all her fads, always hugged the one of social prominence, decided to pass a month in Washington. Hearing constantly of the leading rôle played by the Thones in the gaieties of the Capital, she concluded that she was neglecting her opportunities.

Her first advances, when once settled with her maid at the Shoreham, in an apartment for which she paid a great deal and got very little, were to the Senator. She had left her husband behind her as a super-

fluous commodity; male support was imperative. If Thorne had forgotten her temporary capture of him at the time of the creek controversy, she had not. She sent a note, not to his house, but to his club. Her mistake did not strike her until his formal bow, when he passed her in the street one day. His card, posed without inquiry, warned her that she had committed an error of taste. In anything but an amiable mood, after this ill-digested snub, she had herself conveyed to the mansion on the circle to call officially on Mrs. Thorne. The answer to this was an immediate bunch of roses, with an invitation to drive the next afternoon. Coralie always kindled to old associations. She had seen little for a couple of years of her country neighbors, having spent her Summers in Europe. Mrs. Farnham had at no time been congenial to her, but all snobbishness was so abhorrent to her that she would not seem to slight old acquaintances. Coralie often dropped cards at palaces, but she always clambered up the narrow stairs of out-of-the-way apartment-houses to make sure that their inhabitants should know she had called in person.

At four o'clock the following day her horses pranced at the Shoreham's doorway. As Mrs. Farnham tucked in her draperies next to those of the Senator's wife she was impressed with the fact that never in her life had this lady looked so well.

She wore one of those gowns and one of those hats which are such triumphs of talent that the plainest woman is redeemed. And she was now very far from plain. There was in her whole person a radiance—that "something splendid" which Genevieve Safford dwelt on in her first interview with Hazard. The dress of dark blue velvet, with its toque to match, bordered at throat, wrists and brim with superb sable, the becoming veil, the well-fitting shoes, the lorgnon with its diamond monogram dangling on a chain of gold, and fine, pure pearls—to-day, at any rate, Mrs. Thorne was handsome. The admiration that her perfect equipage inspired in the gap-

ing loafers, idlers, porters of the sidewalk and the vestibule gave Mrs. Farnham a sense of reflected consequence. She tossed her head and felt glad she had accepted, glad she had come to Washington, glad this time, at least, she had made no blunder. It is pleasant to be in the winning boat.

It is the privilege of stupidity, however, to disturb the sleeping dog, to kill the goose that lays the egg; and Mrs. Farnham was stupid, with the stupidity of her little, hard heart and her little, narrow brain. She felt disappointed when Mrs. Thorne bade her servant drive toward Arlington, her favorite road. She would have liked to keep in the streets, the thoroughfares, to be seen. It is not worth while to go out with people who are *à la mode* if nobody knows about it. She asked Mrs. Thorne to stop at the stationer's, ordered some note paper she didn't need, and dallied some time at a florist's over some plants for her drawing-room, which were far too expensive. She was rewarded for her stratagem by encountering some acquaintances, and could say to them as she left, "Mrs. Thorne is waiting for me; so sorry; the horses are spirited, they don't like standing."

When she ensconced herself again in the smart victoria and was bowled, rather unwillingly, toward the more lonely suburbs, she pondered on what trick of fate assists certain women to superiority over their fellows. Petty natures are apt to suspect pettiness in others. She concluded that under Mrs. Thorne's gracious questionings as to her plans in Washington there lay a patronizing condescension. This impression, born of a mean suspicion, joined to the rankling memory of Thorne's incivility, filled her with a sort of blind resentment against her unconscious interlocutor. "She feels her oats," she thought to herself; "and what wonder? What is she, after all, but a parvenu? If it hadn't been for her money Thorne wouldn't have looked at her. I remember

when she was gawky and a dowdy. She looks well now on account of her clothes. What clothes can do! Such a poise! Such airs! Can she have heard the de Mossig yarn, I wonder, or does she still think her hubby a Galahad? What would she say if she knew how he can flirt when her back's turned?"

From these inchoate currents of reflection Mrs. Farnham took a dive into deep waters. She began to speak of Madame de Mossig and the tales about her behavior. Mrs. Thorne's calm, gray-blue eyes turned on her in such candor, while she took the Greek's part and extolled her beauty, that Mrs. Farnham became exasperated. Pushed by one of those silly impulses to which women of her nervous pattern are subject, she blurted out the words before she half-decided to utter them.

"How outrageous people are! You can speak well of her, when the political enemies of your husband have the indecency to insist he is the father of her child! I have been so sorry for him, so indignant for you!"

She regretted the speech as soon as made; but it was too late.

We may here say that the blown bubble had thus far passed without bursting over Coralie Thorne's head, that it was left to Mrs. Farnham to prick it and bespatter her. It is an anomaly of this topsy-turvy world of ours that the calumnies which most nearly concern us are frequently those we are the last to hear. Coralie was so popular in Washington—nay, so beloved—that no word connecting her husband with Madame de Mossig had reached her. Apart from the friendly sentiment that hushed the prattling busybodies in her presence, the surroundings of official life and of wealth, while they may have given tongue to the hounds, in a measure kept them at bay. If Coralie's noble simplicity won for her a respect that shrinks from wounding, her entourage of extreme luxury was also a special rampart. It kept intruders at a distance. The formalities of great

houses make their privacy more inviolable.

"Indignant for you!"

One could almost hear the rattle of the armor's buckle, the click of the closed visor. It was a valiant front Coralie presented to her tormentor. She, at least, was no "scatterer." She gauged in an instant the necessity of silencing this insect, lest it do further damage. How could she understand this bloodless parasite that sucked in the dark for its mean thirst! It should, at any rate, not see the sting inflicted. Let it be said to her infinite honor, it was of her husband that she thought. With a confused wish to save him from such poison she met Mrs. Farnham's cruel words with a gay laugh, a laugh in which it would have taken experienced ears to detect a tinge of overacted exuberance.

"Dear me!" she said; "is my poor Hazard another of that obstreperous infant's—godpapas? How inexpressibly comic! Really, you know I'm dying to make him shout over it! They are reaching sublimity in quantity, at least, if not in quality."

She laughed once more and deftly turned the subject to other channels, but without the shock that betrays design. And never on the homeward drive, or when she pressed Mrs. Farnham's hand and begged her to dine the following Thursday, "At half-past eight, my dear," did a moment's weakness expose her emotion.

"I don't believe there's anything in it," thought Mrs. Farnham. "She didn't seem to care a bit, or take it tragically. She's hardly the sort of woman to be clever at dissembling. Well, I'm glad there was no harm done. I felt worried after I spoke." She was not a fiend, after all and was, on the whole, relieved.

No harm!

Coralie got to her apartments, she hardly knew how. She rang the bell.

"Ask Mr. Darrell to come to my study," she said to the answering domestic. "And tell Mariette to go to my room and prepare my dinner gown and jewels; tell her I'll wear my black velvet and sapphires."

The affection between Thorne and Darrell had never abated. It is obvious, however, that when one makes of one's chum a brother-in-law, it is rather a bar than an instigation to complete confidence. When one's wife is one's friend's sister many details of experience cease to be recounted. Affection continued, intimacy was less close. Then, of course, the *épanchements* of youth cannot continue, and a measure of reserve sprang up between the friends, while their mutual regard did not cool.

Darrell, full of philanthropic and active benefactions, protector of civic improvements, promoter of artistic enterprises, was by no means a lazy man of leisure. Nevertheless, he found time to visit his relatives, and frequently came to pass a Sunday in their cheerful company. He was very fond of his niece Viva, and found with his dear trio the outlet for a tenderness he had not bestowed on wife or children of his own.

"Ask Mr. Darrell to come to me."

She felt as if she were stifling. The fact that her husband had gone to New York for thirty-six hours paralyzed the hunger of all hot characters for immediate explanation. She knew a letter could not reach him and be answered—a telegram was out of the question. How should she possess her soul until his return, until she could look into his face and know for herself!

For this bolt out of a clear sky had struck her dumb. She had, indeed, heard much of Madame de Mossig's conduct, and had herself smilingly called her court "the attachés," but the paternity of the son had not been doubted in her presence, and Mrs. Farnham's filthy innuendo had pierced her clean spirit to its depths. Her reply she felt to have been odious. She shrank disgusted at her own adroitness.

Hamilton might bring her some comfort—some, until Thorne came himself and stamped out with one word this nest of hornets.

Darrell found her pacing the floor

in agitation. As she had hoped, his counsels gave her consolation.

He pointed out to her the difficulties and dangers that beset men in public office. The grudge, the spite, the backbiting, that she, too, if she intended to help her husband, must learn to face.

"There will soon," said Coralie, "be a vacancy in the Cabinet. I heard yesterday Lawler will resign on account of his health. I wanted it for Hazard; I know he can have it. The President as much as said so to General Bates, who came to sound me. And my hopes are not all selfish. It was not for myself—hardly for him. I think men like my husband, who have had such advantages, can do something for humanity. I was keeping this surprise for him. I thought he would be so pleased, . . . but if he lets people say such things about him, gets himself so be-draggled, who will stand by him?"

Darrell was touched that all her fears seemed for her husband. But now, at last, there came the woman's cry.

"I always felt a shrinking from her. I have been an idiot not to see she was after him. Only the other day I was a fool, taking up the cudgels for her. General Bates said to me, cynically: 'Oh, you don't know women.' He was right; I do not. What a child I have been! Oh, my God! Hamilton, tell me it's all a hideous lie!"

"I know it's a lie!" said Darrell, sternly. Then, in his gentleness, he added: "Men like Thorne don't leave such a creature as you are for such as she." But as he spoke the words, they sounded foolish to him. He came and patted her hand and hair, and she wept on his breast, and by-and-bye she tried to smile and went up to dress. For one always has to go and dress.

Thorne came home and met his wife. They had an hour's talk together. In disengaging himself from blame, he did all that is in the power of a gentleman to throw no mud on the fame of Hélène de Mossig. Nevertheless, as the conjugal horizon

must at all costs be kept clear, she had, to a certain extent, to be sacrificed. She had been very foolish, and Coralie guessed that if not guilty—at least with Hazard—it was not her fault. She essayed to absolve her husband from all part in the folly, but not until she extracted from him a promise that there should be no more drives, no more walks, and no bouquets sent to aggressive fair ones. In other words, she did and said exactly what every jealous woman has done and said before her—committed the colossal mistake of pledging her husband to a course that their worldly environment made almost impossible. This course has never failed to drive a man to prevarication, if not to falsehood. It was easy for him to promise never to see Madame de Mossig again in tête-à-tête, never to approach her in public, unless through exigency of etiquette; but it is not easy to take vows that a call shall not be paid or a courtesy extended to any woman. No *femme du monde* ever exacts such assurances, knowing their puerility and inefficacy. Coralie, later, in a saner moment, removed the embargo, begging her husband to do whatever he saw fit; but Thorne instinctively knew that the seeds of distrust had sprung up in her.

"I hope that Farnham woman will never cross this threshold," he said, angrily, after their first exhaustive talk.

"Mrs. Farnham will dine here on Thursday," said Coralie, with haughtiness, "and she will sit on your left."

In fact, she developed after this a curious inconsequence. Sometimes she would be profoundly melancholy, sometimes exaggeratedly merry. "That tale annoyed her," said the Senator's ill-wishers. "The poor thing's growing quite flighty."

Her caustic sallies were now and again directed, in Hazard's hearing, on the de Mossig household. One day, indeed, she had met the husband carefully tooling the baby's perambulator, while the child's nurse followed

with a large umbrella. "He was so proud," she said, "he stopped me as well as all the passers-by." To Thorne—whose wife's temperament had always remained a sealed book—how she could laugh at and belittle what had caused her such keen suffering was incomprehensible. He realized that only infinite tact and patience could extricate him from a pass of possible portentous consequence. He was a little tired of his wife's vagaries, irritated at what might be expected of him.

She seemed timidly to dread his displeasure, while far less careful than formerly not to deserve it. She grew shy of him. She withdrew herself. Her state of mind was revealed in a letter received by her friend Genevieve in the Spring. It ended thus:

... So much for the flaring, glaring life! You ask, dearest, for a word of the hidden one. What shall I say to you? What will you say to me? When I was very young I knew love and all its torments. We recognize the symptoms. Can you fancy such a psychological enigma as a woman who has felt a deep affection for her husband for years, but with no—excitement, suddenly plunged into the abyss of jealous distrust and all its evil attendants?—above all, fear of herself? What does it mean? Have I fallen in love with my own husband? How unfashionable! Now that I see his power in all directions, I tremble. I tremble all the time lest I bore him, lest I be insufficient. I am unhappy. My heart is hurt; my vanity *froissé*. I didn't know I had any! I think I am one of those women who have *l'amour triste*. I used to be grateful for my composure. It is all gone. I am often horrid to him. He cannot understand. How should he? Good-bye, dear.

No, he could not understand; but understanding might only have wearied him. He asked only for peace at home, and behold there loomed a threatening sword.

In the meanwhile, de Mossig was notified by his government of a changed post. He and Madame de Mossig, the nurse, the baby and the perambulator sailed away from the United States forever.

IV

He did not understand, or he would not. A coldness rose between them, alas! And it was in the following Autumn that he began to find solace, a solace from which he had resolutely for many long months turned away; for he knew, as men know these things, that here was his Waterloo. He had always known it. From that first time they had touched hands—and oddly enough, in Madame de Mossig's boudoir—there had existed between them that magic fire which warns of peril. Nothing, however, could have been more veiled, decorous, delicate, than their intercourse.

When he and Leah Arden were put side by side at dinner parties they were both conscious of a sort of breathless wonder. Sometimes, as his eyes sank into hers, her lids would flutter like a dove's. He got to like to watch this fluttering. Sometimes she smiled full into his face, and the blood would surge to it from his heart. They never talked much. It seemed needless. There was nothing to say. They knew all. Her slight figure, her low laughter, her gestures, the talent with which she managed to look better dressed than other women in her unadorned gowns—everything in her pleased his taste. By-and-bye he became so restless out of her presence, so content when in it, he got into the habit of dropping in of an afternoon at her mother's house; the shabby little house in the shabbier street, so sadly in need of paint outside, but whose interior showed the refinement that gilds poverty. He rarely found her alone. Usually Mrs. Deventer, her mother, was present.

One day the latter consulted him on an investment she had made. His associations with finance committees gave him an authority that promised her enlightenment. This became an excuse for frequent conference. Once or twice Mrs. Deventer, who was an invalid, was in her room, and Leah and Thorne discussed together, in the cozy drawing-room, the resources that seemed to him so pitifully slender.

He began to feel a longing to assist these ladies to an income more worthy of their station. He did, in fact, once speculate for them with such conservative sagacity as placed them indirectly under obligation. His request that this act of friendship should remain secret seemed to cement the tacit compact that was to have such fateful results. In the meantime, Mrs. Arden, while not an intimate of Mrs. Thorne's, sometimes went to her house. Their relations continued cordial.

Leah Arden could hardly be said to be a woman of robust principle. She was not perfectly sure that the virtuous were happy and the wicked miserable. She vaguely hoped these things were so. She was, however, far from being an *intriguante*. Her serene, pleasure-loving mind caught at passing distractions and dallied with them. Her marital misfortune left her the philosophy to grasp what was left of life without insistent intention. She really had no scheme. When this new, sweet triumph came to her of Thorne's less and less disguised devotion, she played with the bright flame and burned her hands.

This time the revelation of her husband's fresh imprudence came to Coralie direct and through no outsider. She by accident opened a note of Mrs. Arden's to him.

The Thornes had not the vulgar habit common to many married persons of rifling each other's correspondence. It was quite unintentionally that Mrs. Thorne broke the seal of this particular envelope, thrust on her by an inadvertent servant. She opened it with many others directed to herself.

The missive in itself was unimportant—unimportant except as it disclosed a degree of familiarity of which she was ignorant. There was an allusion, "When you came last Sunday," a word of badinage about some person met at Mrs. Deventer's house, who was unknown to Coralie even by name, a vague hint that the writer would occupy a certain box at the

theatre with friends on a certain evening. It seemed an invitation.

The words were few. She had scanned them all before she realized they were not for her.

She put them back in their envelope, and finding a pencil on her desk, wrote on the margin: "Pardon; opened by mistake.—C. T." She rang for her maid and bade her give this letter to the Senator's valet for his master.

She then went down to receive a French diplomat's wife who brought letters of introduction. She was a little, dark, frightened thing, a bride, just from a wretched ocean voyage, separated for the first time from her mother and her people. She looked very youthful and very homesick. She insisted on speaking in the halting English laboriously collected before her departure.

"All I ate, did eat, should eat, did render me sick," she said. "And oh! it was so *triste* in the days that the *pont* was wet and we were like rats in the dark! And I am yet sick."

Coralie sympathized and was kind, and the stranger's frozen heart melted at the contact of that large nature, of that warm presence which cared for others' troubles.

She had been taken to a party the night after her arrival, and now, trying to appear *au fait* and not a novice, she made comments on the celebrities there pointed out to her. Among others she spoke of Leah Arden. "There was a Madame Ardenne," she said. "My husband, he does think her so pretty! Do you think her so pretty?"

Coralie replied, with sudden gravity, "Yes."

"I do not think, I do not find it," said the French girl, with an intonation that seemed to hide a wound. "I tell my husband perhaps it is that she talks pretty. Does she talk pretty?"

"Not half as prettily as you do English," said Coralie, comfortingly. "Your accent is so captivating, all the gentlemen will be falling in love with you."

The small face was brightened by a smile, but the dark eyes filled with tears. "Edouard had to be presented to all," she said, "a quantity of *monde*. I was alone. If you had been there, madame, I should not have been so miserable."

"I hope you will get to like Washington when you know us better," said Coralie, cheerfully.

"I had a friend at this legation, two years passed," said the little woman. "She did tell me the climate was too bad here. She got the miasma—malaria, you say? She said the first Winter she did lose her teeth, the second her hair, the third her reputation."

"I thought," said Coralie, laughing in spite of herself at this lurid portrayal of Washington's advantages, "when a woman lost the first two the last was safe."

This witticism was thrown away on her visitor, who remained sunk in gloom. She spoke English better than she understood it.

After a cup of tea she at last got herself off, Mrs. Thorne promising to call on her soon.

"*Oh, venez bientôt, je vous en prie,*" she said, gratefully. "I do so much like you."

Coralie went up once more to her study; it opened into her bedroom on one side, on the other into the palm-embowered Louis Seize boudoir, where she informally received her closer friends.

She walked now from one to the other—a habit contracted when in deep thought. Her gown trailed over the fur rugs with their interstices of polished parquet; a tepid sunset streamed through the windows, flecking the floor with streaks of light. Cautious and circumspect she decided that she would be. No repetition, this time, of the outbursts that had met the de Mossig incident, and had been so injudicious.

As to the man who has not touched a woman's hand, her physical charm is only food for the imagination, so to him who has not fathomed a woman's soul it cannot give its harmonies.

Thrust back on herself she now was wiser, yet a sense of drifting farther and farther from him came to her through her self-control.

When he came, a half-hour later, to find her, with Mrs. Arden's letter in his hand, and she looked at him, she felt as if he had shrunk in his clothes—that they were but a bundle of dry goods and he a wound-up automaton animating them grotesquely. The momentary eclipse of her strength of character, which he had failed to read as a guide to her sentiment, was well over, or so she imagined. She was now mistress of herself, or so she thought.

His justification of Mrs. Arden's note was as satisfactory as such things ever are. He pointed out to her that had there been the slightest clandestine element in their acquaintance, she would have sent her letter to his club and not to his house. The momentary arching of an eyebrow warned him that this last intimation was ill-advised. Mrs. Thorne listened to him, however, without one sign or word of displeasure. When he finished he was so disconcerted by her attitude he wished he had left the matter alone.

"Now, my dear," she said, nodding pleasantly, "don't waste any more of your time, but go and dress for dinner. Please don't be late, as you were yesterday, for there are a lot of people coming, and we are going, after, to the play."

He had explained to her about Mrs. Deventer's investments, and that it was to discuss this subject Mrs. Arden had seemed to give him a rendezvous. "I suppose," he added, lingering on the threshold, "knowing what a busy man I am, she didn't like to ask me to call."

"I hardly read the letter," and then he had a view of his wife's back as she disappeared into her bedroom and closed the door. Verily, Warren Vincent's pupil had learned her lesson. Thorne had, in fact, avoided asking Mrs. Arden to address any stray note she might indite to his club, and he now rather cursed the

over-sensitiveness that had caused complication.

Yet what? Was it not his own morbid conscience that made him feel complication existed?

If we have failed to point out that Thorne possessed a conscience, we have indeed failed in the portrayal of his character. He who had been made wretched for months at the memory of a rebuke administered to his dead boy could not be devoid of sensibility. Yet so inconsequent were the verdicts of his detractors that the very ones who shrieked to the stars their commiseration for Coralie now blamed him for having been needlessly harsh in his treatment of Madame de Mossig—his cold shaking-off of her. There was no doubt that she had suffered—a condition for which his amiable philandering was perhaps responsible—but Thorne had felt further dalliance in that quarter an insult to his wife, and if there was cruelty it was the unconscious one of a lack of perception. Now he felt sorry if his wife was annoyed, but Coralie played her part so admirably that, as the days went on, he told himself that he exaggerated her suspicions. We exaggerate what we know to be well founded.

He could no longer conceal to himself that he was gripped by a sorcery against which reason beat itself vainly, before which morality was dumb.

And it was all so refined, so exquisite, so elevating; above all, they were so happy! For every word was now an avowal, every touch a joy, while they lingered still in that middle land which beckons, yet withholds. How events would have shaped themselves it is difficult to predict, had not the *dénouement* of the drama been hastened by an untoward incident.

One day, while in the Senate chamber, Thorne tardily remembered that it was his wife's birthday. In the pressure of public business, perhaps of private obsession, he had failed to recall it. With a sense of unusual compunction he ran out at the luncheon hour to a neighboring florist's

and ordered sent some splendid flowers, with a word on his card. He asked her to meet him at five o'clock at their stables, where he should stop to see a pair of horses he thought of purchasing for her. "If you like," he said, "we can put them in the cart and try them for a half-hour."

His messenger returned with a note from his wife, thanking him for the roses, but saying she was suffering from a severe *migraine* and had gone to bed.

His day was an exhausting one. A long debate on questions of moment, of which the details were dry and arid, drained his vitality and sapped his mental faculties. When he sprang into a cab, at half-past four, he felt so tired that he thought he would go directly home, but passing close to his stable doors, he concluded to see the nags. He was fagged, not dressed, out of mood. As the groom put the horses through their paces in front of the sidewalk where he stood, he suddenly saw a graceful figure on the opposite side of the street. All fatigue left him at once. He was only sorry he hadn't had time to change his clothes.

Mrs. Arden crossed and joined him. "What perfect beauties!" she said, standing by his side, looking up at him, her hands in her little muff. "You must be wild to try them."

The odor of the violets she wore sent sweet elixirs to his weary brain, their breath seemed to enfold them both as they listened dreamily to the beat of the horses' hoofs on the pavement. The moment was like heaven to Thorne after the murky atmosphere of political squabbling and suffocating ugliness.

By one of those impulses that come to the most sedate of us, after long confinement to heated inactivity of body, "Brien," he said to his coachman, "how long will it take you to harness? I'll do without you or Thomas—there isn't time for you to get on your togs. Just slip their collars on and tie them up to the cart."

"Less than fifteen minutes, sir," replied the man, whistling to Thomas,

who was still running up and down the street with the pair.

"It's quite too dark now for you to walk home alone," said the Senator to Mrs. Arden, decidedly. "I'll drive you to your door. They seem perfectly gentle."

They walked about, waiting, the night wind wooing their lungs. The dusk crept about them as if to draw them closer to each other. He stooped and drew her fur collar up about her throat caressingly. Leah was one of those bright beings to whom pleasure is more than pride, delight than dignity. This is probably the reason that they—arrive. Pride and dignity are handicaps. So, when the trap was ready, he lifted her to his side, dispensing with the footman, and they drove away.

The lamps were lit. The avenues were growing deserted. There seemed no chance of an encounter with acquaintances. At any rate, the rashness of this innocent escapade intoxicated them. What more natural than to prolong the drive a little?

He whipped the horses up toward the British Embassy. By the time they reached it the weather changed. The wind blew in gusts, drops of rain began to fall. He handed her the reins while he opened an umbrella that the groom had tucked under his feet. The man had seen the rising storm. They turned back. A few minutes later, darting out of shadow, a woman in a long black coat crossed nearly under the wheels. Mrs. Arden pulled in, but not before the pole almost grazed her. The woman uttered a faint cry, and her white face looked up at them.

It was Coralie.

Thorne felt impelled to stop and call to her, but was so paralyzed by the unexpected apparition that his voice failed. Before either of them could muster energy to meet a situation demanding instant action she disappeared.

When Thorne reached the house he went direct to her boudoir.

She was alone before the fire,

standing, and as he approached she did not seem to heed him.

"Coralie," he said.

She turned and struck him full in the face with the back of her hand. She wore a cameo ring, sharply terminated at both ends with a diamond. One of them cut the skin on his thin cheekbone. A drop of blood oozed and slowly dropped down his face.

V

NOTHING more simple than Mrs. Thorne's hapless promenade. At four she awoke, refreshed and cured. Her room was full of the fragrance of her husband's gift. She took the cup of tea her maid brought to her bedside, and decided that it was not too late to surprise him. She would keep the tryst that he asked of her. She felt sure he would stop to see the horses.

She dressed, donned a long coat in case they should drive, and walked to the stables. All this took time. When she reached them her husband and Mrs. Arden had already left.

Brien, whether through loyalty to his master or devotion to his mistress—Coralie was worshipped by her *valetaille*—prudently omitted to mention that the Senator was not alone. He had viewed the tête-à-tête with a measure of disapproval. Perhaps he had heard things; perhaps he had not. How much or how little these mute witnesses suspect or know of our actions often remains an unsolved mystery. If some scandals break out through domestics, more are stifled. Mr. and Mrs. Thorne's household were faithfully attached to them.

How could Brien imagine that Mrs. Thorne would have the insane idea of following her husband! She, however, decided to do so. Supposing him to have gone in the direction he in fact did take, she sauntered up Connecticut avenue. She hoped to meet him on his way back.

The shower alarmed her, and she crossed to return, when happened

what we know. In the flight homeward, umbrella-less, the rain plashing on her hair, she was haunted by the look of fear on her husband's face.

Fear! Of what, then? Of her? There could be no further doubts.

That he, on her birthday, could first ask her and then take that other one was of small consequence. The clue was in his apprehension. Yes—she divined it in his eyes when they met hers.

What had she sunk to, then?

The acute distress to which she had been prey for the past year, with its strange accesses of torpor—the rack and thumbscrew of shaken confidence, hurt *amour propre*, humbled pride, despised affection—left her impotent to bear one more indignity.

Coralie was what is called a virtuous woman; she was certainly a strong one. But we expect too much of virtue. We are too surprised when it proves vulnerable. The human remains human. She had marked her husband's growing passion for Mrs. Arden. She had gauged it clearly. She realized that in herself was growing a canker of hate, which was belittling and degrading.

She had thus far opened but one note, and that by accident, but she wondered if the day would come when she should lay traps to get his letters and read them secretly and perhaps re-seal them, lest he know that a detective lurked in his house. Nay, perhaps, since there had been question of letters at the club, she would send a servant there with one of his cards and get what went there for him, and know the truth.

These morbid broodings frightened her at times with their demoniac promptings.

There is no doubt about it that a husband's infidelity remains under all aspects a humiliation. If beloved, there is pain; if not, there is at least offense.

What had she sunk to?

One of those wives from whom men shrink? whom they cheat and lie to and laugh at with their friends?

whose suspicions become a byword, whose furies are town property?

It is needless to say that such a dread on the part of Coralie Darrell Thorne was without foundation. Her wide popularity, her noble personality, her brilliant intelligence, made of her a picturesque figure and a salient one. She could never be the plain appendage of a fascinating and neglectful husband. But in such crises women of her type do not stop to weigh.

When she unfastened her wet cloak and pushed back her damp hair, a great, wild thirst to revenge herself for the injustice done her, the false position she was thrust into, ravaged her soul. Then he had come; and we know how she met him.

She stood dry-lipped, wide-pupiled, staring at his drawn face, at that dark drop which seemed to her to grow wider and wider, until it drowned them both in its red tide. And as she looked, a great reaction of pity—of pity for him, for herself, for the woe of the world—overcame her; pity, that agonizing snare of tender spirits!

A cry burst from her lips.

Thorne, with the unerring prescience of his keen reasoning, knew that this hour was a landmark of their destinies. With a gesture full of manly grace, he seized the fingers that had dealt the blow and raised them to his lips.

"Thank you," he said.

The sight of his wife's hurrying figure, alone in the storm, under the hoofs, while he and Mrs. Arden throned insolently above her, had sobered him, as a drunkard is sobered, brought back to himself by nervous shock. And between Mrs. Arden and himself the few words spoken at her door at parting seemed to raise a barrier of new resolves and better purposes.

She, too, had seen and had been sorry, and not triumphant. "It was bad taste in me," she thought, repenting of her afternoon's exploit. "And he thought so, too." In her mortification she grew contemptuous. "I detest married men, and always have,

and I have got through with them!" How long such moods can last is a matter of conjecture, but the arrow that shapes fate is often winged in a second's interval.

It would seem, therefore, as if the readjustment of the future devolved on Coralie herself.

So at least felt Thorne. . . .

"I haven't come to excuse myself," he said to her—she had sunk to a chair and he stood before her, his handkerchief pressed to his cheek. "This was your birthday. You were poorly. It was my place and should have been my pleasure to come direct from the Capitol to you. Believe me, however, when I say that nothing more unpremeditated could have occurred than my meeting with Mrs. Arden. She happened to pass in the street as I was examining the horses. It was getting late. I offered to drive her home. That is all. Only I realize how it must have seemed to you, and I am most regretful. I ask your pardon. You are hereafter safe from any more stupidities of mine."

Always generous, Coralie did not taunt him with the detail that when she met them they were far from Leah's street. She only bowed her head, and he went on.

"I haven't forgotten, Coralie, what you were to me when Tony died, though I may sometimes seem to you indifferent and preoccupied. The cares of my career . . ."

She rose and walked over to the mantelpiece and gazed at herself in the mirror that hung above it.

"I am making acquaintance with myself over again," she said. "We grow old several times."

"You shall not grow old through me, my dear child," he said, with emotion, making a movement as if to take her in his arms. "I . . ."

"You see," she said, "it is not of you I am thinking in the least to-day; it is of myself."

He still moved forward, but she drew back, and her glance arrested him with its menace.

Its pity had passed.

"Yes, of myself; and it is time.

My dignity is precious to me, my character. Do you ever think, Hazard, what character means? Mine was well enough in its way, not mean, not petty, I think."

"Ah, never, never!" he interrupted.

She went on: "Lately it has changed. It is dwindling, shrinking, blackening. I see it as it will be soon. I must save it. It cries out to me!"

He was painfully impressed with the poignancy of her words. "How she must have suffered!" he thought. "How blind I have been!"

She continued: "And I will hear its voice. Oh, don't overrate me. When I release you—"

He started.

"—when I release you from the trammels that weigh on us both, it is through no enthusiastic desire for your welfare, through no self-surrender of my privileges as mistress of your house that another may fill the place better. What will be your emancipation will also be mine. It isn't happiness I expect or give. I doubt if this is the way to that. It will be for me salvation of what was best in me, of what there was in my nature that I prized. I know that I am not a beautiful woman, but I am not a base one. I do not accept the chain that makes me so."

"You were always magnanimous," he murmured, marveling that of her rival she did not speak one bitter word, "and I unworthy."

She was on her feet again. She wavered a moment, tall and uncertain in the light of the candles and the flame that lighted the hearth with bluish gleams. Then she left him alone—as she had done before when he had come to her with Leah Arden's opened letter. Only now he recognized that something irrevocable lay between them, an impassable gulf, a wide ocean in which he vainly flaunted signals of his distress. She was steering away from him, for shores distant and impalpable, which, in his earthiness, he could but dimly guess at, and he felt left behind to drift alone on a silent and inexorable sea.

Coralie, once more in her room, threw herself on her bed in an agony of sobs too fierce for a woman's frame. Old happiness, old affliction came, ghostlike visitants, to lean over her in her desolate lament.

She recalled one day when in the Bois in Paris, she and Arthur Penfold hunted for wild flowers together, under the wet leaves of the moist wood-paths.

It was one of those unforgotten days that haunt the memory with their eternal and abiding regret. They loved each other perfectly on that sweet morning of youth and hope, with the bird notes in their ears and the Spring sunshine above them.

She remembered the thrill of her baby boy's soft mouth at her breast; the tiny, clinging hands of her first-born, the brave male child she had rocked on her bosom in all a mother's exaltation. She thought of his lonely grave on the Hudson where Autumn leaves lay thick and Winter snows. "Oh, Tony, Tony!" she cried, "I do not forget thee, my beloved, my beloved!"

She longed for the clasp of a loving hand, and would have called Viva, the dear living child. But Viva had gone with her governess to visit a young friend in the country. So that this hour of despairing abandonment found her alone.

All hours, gay or terrible, drop to eternity. So this one passed.

A few days later society was distressed to hear that Mrs. Thorne was ill of a cerebral fever.

Mrs. Safford, telegraphed for, came to the summons.

Thorne was exemplary in his solicitude and his attentions. In the rapid changes from delirium to stupor she did not seem to heed his nearness or his absences. There is nothing so dividing or so baffling as the vagaries of hallucination. He had the chilling sense that she had slipped out of his reach forever.

One afternoon—when she was convalescing—a nurse called Mrs. Saf-

ford. A lady who declined to give her card had begged that someone from the sickroom should speak with her.

Genevieve went down the marble stairs. She raised the heavy portière that hung before the door of the large drawing-room. Perfect order reigned; the tall palms, lately changed, stood freshly green in their pots of delft and majolica; the vases on all the tables and étageres were filled with long-stemmed roses; logs burned on the hearth. Nevertheless, to Genevieve the room appeared curiously rigid without the spirit that usually pervaded it. Where the arrangement of bric-à-brac, books and tea tables is left to menials, there is but empty splendor—a missed meaning.

A lady was standing at one of the windows, looking out. She turned as Genevieve advanced to greet her. It was Mrs. Arden.

Coralie's wan appearance was still oppressing Mrs. Safford. Brain fever is a devastating demon that plays havoc with the strongest constitution. Coralie's, always rugged and buoyant, had conquered. But dire indeed were the ravages of the battle. Her falling hair cut short hung about her cheeks; her eyes, unnaturally large, had a wildness in them; the nose sharpened, the mouth parched, the wasted fingers from which the rings rolled off—she looked a wreck of her former self.

Her room arranged for illness, the mirrors covered that she might not see in them the faces she insisted mocked at her from their depths, all the paraphernalia of sickness gave the charming apartment the air of a hospital. It had become the refuge of disease, of possible death. Here, on the contrary, in this lofty salon, was gathered only what could decorate and embellish, and Mrs. Arden's girlish form detaching itself from shadow seemed to Genevieve the fitting goddess of the shrine.

Her curly auburn hair was dressed in the latest mode, voluminously rolled to frame her face under her little fur cap. It perched coquettishly

above the lovely brow, wide as Clytie's, low as Faustina's. The purple eyes under dark lashes looked out serene and innocent from the glowing face. The crisp air without, the warmth within, gave her lips and cheeks more than their usual color. Leah Arden, in her taut brown dress and soft dark furs, was the embodiment of roseate health and luscious womanhood. She carried a bunch of orchids in her hand.

The contrast was so violent between the woman she had left and this fair creature that Genevieve, who was not without imagination, felt her heart contract.

They had met once or twice, and they shook hands.

"I must apologize to you," said Mrs. Arden, in her rich voice, "but I have been dreadfully worried about Mrs. Thorne, and I wouldn't be put off any longer with vague reports in the street and at the door. I wanted particularly to see someone who had access to the sickroom and hear if Mrs. Thorne is really and actually out of danger."

"She is out of danger," said Mrs. Safford.

Leah heaved a sigh as of relief, which did not escape Mrs. Safford.

"But she was very ill?"

"So ill that I gave her up for two or three days, but she is pulling through, and now is nicely." Then, being a simple person, and her methods quite crude, she added: "The Senator was in despair."

The words were barely uttered when the despairing gentleman pushed through the curtain and came in. Nothing could have been more correct than their greeting—his "How kind of you! Mrs. Thorne will, I hope, see you herself in a week's time," and her "I am so pleased to hear that all is well"—utterly banal, well bred and decorous. The man, as is the manner of men, concealed his discomposure better than the woman, whose furious flush Genevieve noticed.

Leah covered her confusion by handing Mrs. Safford the bouquet.

"These are from mamma and me," she said, "for Mrs. Thorne."

After a few more inquiries and answers Thorne accompanied her to the door, which the servant opened for her exit.

He returned to the drawing-room.

He could not know how far Mrs. Safford was admitted to his wife's confidence, but he felt that at all costs this call must not be mentioned to Coralie, or the flowers given.

He was uneasy. His calm was ruffled. Genevieve saw her advantage, as she had seen much and guessed more. She would not have been a woman and loyal to her friend if she had not secretly enjoyed his evident discomfiture.

"I must go right up to Coralie with Mrs. Arden's flowers," she said. "Orchids are so frail they must be put into water at once. It would be too bad that these should fade."

Here was a quandary! A person who is but just out of the clutches of brain fever can hardly be approached with the subject that unbalanced.

He cleared his throat, with a detaining finger on Genevieve's sleeve.

"Why, Coralie is particularly fond of orchids," she said. "Why am I not, then, to take her these?"

Then Thorne said: "Some day when she is well again I will explain to you; now all I ask is that you do not mention Mrs. Arden's visit—or the flowers." It had to be done. It was the lesser of two evils.

Then Genevieve knew.

She threw Leah Arden's orchids from her to the table. They rolled off the edge to the floor, and she did not stoop to pick them up.

"Oh!" she said, with a mocking inflection, and left the room, and the Senator was very uncomfortable indeed.

Leah Arden was unhappy. Between her and Thorne no spoken or written word had passed since the night of the fatal drive. Mrs. Thorne's illness alarmed her. A keen remorse, foreign to her habitual insouciance, so possessed her

that she determined to call in self-abnegation and self-defense. Why not? There was no break between her and the Thones, and he should see and she should see that a mere friendly sentiment animated her toward them both.

Her immense emotion on seeing him again proved to her that toward him, at least, her friendliness was but a word.

"Who was it?" asked Coralie, sitting up against her pillows with her pinched, haggard face, which a few weeks seemed to have strangely aged.

"Lady Lightpace," said Mrs. Safford, cheerfully, and with unblushing glibness. "She left many messages from herself and the Ambassador."

"Ah—such a kind woman! What did you say to her?"

"That you were going to get well directly, and so, darling, lie down now and try to sleep. You know the doctor forbids you to sit too long in this position."

"Oh, what does it matter, when everything is weariness!" Then suddenly she threw one arm about Mrs. Safford's neck, drawing her cheek down to her own. "Thank you for your goodness to me, dear," she said, and the sad lips trembled.

Mrs. Safford, unable longer to control herself, beckoned to the nurse and slipped from the detaining arm. In her own room, the tears she shed were the saddest of a happy life.

VI

IT was the following year that Coralie left her husband.

She waited until his term expired. She had no wish to injure him.

When she took the step even Mrs. Safford—at first, at least—disapproved.

"I think you are too hard," she said.

"I was becoming wicked. You don't understand. The concessions of natures like mine are not honest. The reactions are too terrible. I dare not make them."

But Genevieve shook her head, impatient, as are good women who have no grievances. She sent Joseph Turtle to remonstrate.

He was ushered one day, fresh from Persia, into the Long Island house where Viva and her mother were living in seclusion. Thorne was in New York, back at his law practice. Joseph had been recalled.

"They are indecent people," he said to his dear Coralie. "The Shah is an indecent man. I told him so. He complained to our Secretary of State. I was ordered home."

Coralie could not help laughing. He was unchanged.

"My poor Joe," she said, "I'm afraid diplomacy wasn't your vocation."

Yet Genevieve had sent him now on a delicate mission, and he acquitted himself with feeling. The two old friends talked long and gravely. He implored her to pause, reflect, take advice; but Coralie said to him: "I have been in hell, and it consumed me. Love and hate came together. I will not go back to them. It is finished."

And this plain man, who could insult a ruler in his own realm and inveigh against customs that Providence permits, to the detriment of his own fortunes, gave her the only entire sympathy others denied.

Darrell, indeed, said to her: "The decision must be yours. Whatever you do, I will stand by you." But she tacitly avoided, at this moment, calling on him for counsel.

Thorne felt himself aggrieved and wounded. He had not thought of a broken-up home. He detested the vulgarity of it all—the discredit and odium. He had imagined, the fever once abated, she would return to calmer judgment—she on whose strength he had so often leaned. If sometimes a rush of ecstasy at the thought of freedom, and what it might bring to him, shot across his consciousness, it was instantly repudiated. He did and said everything that man can say or do to dissuade her from the final step. His actions,

as his arguments, were vain. Did she secretly guess a lack of sincerity in his attitude? Perhaps.

Six months after their separation Mrs. Thorne obtained a dissolution of her marriage for incompatibility.

A year later it was rumored that Mrs. Arden's case was in the docket. Before it came up her husband died.

Then he and Mrs. Arden went away together one afternoon to a provincial town and got themselves married as best they might. If the ceremony was not quite "regular," it was supposed to suffice.

Of course, this *dénouement* brought back the chilly critics to Coralie's support, tongues were loosed, suppositions raged, sides were taken.

She and Viva—who remained with her by Thorne's consent—slipped away quietly to Italy. She purchased a fine villa out of Rome. She began a new existence.

Thorne's friends gathered to him—and Mrs. Arden's. They tried to persuade him to brave things out; offered to boom him for Mayor, for Governor, for President. His new wife declared she disliked politics and wanted to travel. So he was unmindful of these detaining decoys—he whose air castles they had once been. They started for distant lands.

It was quite three years afterward that a choice party of half a dozen friends were breakfasting one morning in Singleton Ackley's pretty dining-room. The Thones and their concerns were already worn-out themes. The causes of their rupture, her expatriation, his remarriage, were ancient history. To-day, however, a lady present—Mrs. Heathcote—had something to say of them.

"Whom do you think I met in Paris the other day? Hazard Thorne!"

"Fancy! One hardly ever hears of them. And Leah—did you see her?"

"Yes, I saw her, but only for a moment at the play one evening. We spoke in the foyer."

"How did they look?" asked the chorus of voices.

"Thorne came to see me."

The women were particularly keen to hear of this visit. "Is he still a *charmeur*, still the same? Does he seem happy?"

"He came to my hotel one day," said Mrs. Heathcote, "and sent up his card. I was at home. The Colonel was out, and so I had him all to myself."

"Do they live in Paris?" asked Mrs. Gresham.

"They have taken a villa at Versailles."

"Go on," said the chorus.

"Well, then, don't interrupt. You ask how he looks, if he is happy. He is so disgustingly happy that it made me sick!"

"What!" screamed the women.

"Positively ill! And as to looks—he is as fat as a seal and as cumbrous as a walrus. He used to be attractive when he posed for incompleteness, you know, but now that he has found his mate he is as stupid as an owl and as dull as an Englishman!"

Laughter greeted this sally.

"When Englishmen are at their dullest," said Ackley, smiling, "you may depend on it they are plotting somebody's downfall; they are never so dangerous as at the moment when they rob their countenances of all expression."

"Well," said Mrs. Heathcote, laughing, "he seems too *abrut* to plot destruction, yet he was quite communicative; perhaps an exaction of his new wife's. Somehow I thought she had sent him. He told me his days were one long delight; his Leah perfect; his soul—heaven save the mark!—satisfied. The creature came up in the lift to deliver himself of all this. He was absolutely revolting. And I used to admire him!"

"And Leah?" said Mrs. Gresham—"are her violet eyes as beautiful as ever?"

"Her eyes! why, I couldn't see them!"

"Couldn't see them?"

"No; she, too, is so fat they have disappeared."

"Is it possible," murmured Mrs.

Eustis, "that this is the end of their romance? Avoirdupois! How dreadfully discouraging!"

"Were you plotting to elope, my dear?" said her husband.

"But what does he do," asked Mrs. Lorimer, "at Versailles?"

"Do? Why, nothing," said Mrs. Heathcote, with a curve of her lip. "He loves his Leah."

"And he has no further desires, hopes, ambitions, he who was so wide-awake, energetic, aspiring?"

"He loves his Leah," repeated Mrs. Heathcote.

Then Warren Vincent spoke. "It was Mrs. Thorne," he said, "who made him. Mrs. Arden has undone him."

"A late tribute," said Mrs. Eustis, who had heard Vincent's earlier opinions.

"She was no friend to me ever," said Vincent, very low. "She always disliked me, but I have a sense of justice."

"Happiness," said Singleton Ackley, "is not always uplifting, and entire sympathy may bring stagnation; the friction that irritates may spur and stimulate, while softness unmans."

"But at least they do seem happy?" Mrs. Eustis persisted.

"Perfectly so," said Mrs. Heathcote, "without a regret. Leah told me they were entirely congenial."

"And Coralie—who has seen her?" asked Mrs. Gresham.

"I have," said Mrs. Lorimer.

"And I have," said Ackley.

"And is she perfectly happy, too?" They looked at one another, and then Ackley said:

"I was in Rome, and so was Mrs. Lorimer, last Winter. We had the pleasure of dining together at Villa Arquata with Mrs. Darrell-Thorne—so she now calls herself. I did not think she looked perfectly happy; did you?"

"No, rather sad," said Mrs. Lorimer; "but she was very well dressed and not in the least fat."

"That is always something," murmured Warren Vincent.

"She looked remarkably well," said Ackley, "almost handsome; while the girl is a stunning beauty."

"Ah, yes; Viva. Is she grown up?"

"Yes, and a success; lots of young princes after her. When her mother looks at her there is satisfaction, and no wonder."

"I thought her much more interesting than she used to be—Coralie, I mean," said Mrs. Lorimer. "She is very stately. She was always a noble sort of woman, and her face, though older, is wonderfully fine now. Don't you think so, Mr. Ackley? Looks like Marie Antoinette on her way to execution, and that sort of thing. She told me she was often homesick, that the mere life of amusement Americans lived in Europe didn't satisfy her. She should always feel an alien. She says she feels she owes to herself something better, and only remains to give Viva the advantages she didn't herself have. The girl has a talent for sculpture, models pretty heads. Mrs. Thorne says she thinks girls brought up in Europe are simpler, more easily satisfied, than ours, yet she means to return to her own country soon. She says it's good enough for her, and must be for Viva. I hear she has written a play, and a dramatic critic who has read it wants it brought out—thinks it quite wonderful."

"She was always clever," said Mrs. Gresham.

"In the meantime, she has made for herself an excellent position. Their house is quite gay. It is the dearest place, an old thirteenth century villa with falconries,oubliettes and trapdoors; enchanting."

"Mrs. Thorne has elements of greatness," said Ackley. "I am inclined to agree with Vincent that she made her husband. Thorne had

weaknesses of character. He lost something in losing her."

"Nobody seems ever to quite understand why she left him," said Mrs. Gresham.

"Safford says," said Mr. Ackley—"and as his wife is her best friend he may know something about it—that she felt herself dwarfed and cramped and hampered by those weaknesses I speak of. In other words, she tried to make him fly, and failing, decided to let him fall."

"That is Nietzsche's advice," said Horace Eustis, "but it is hardly Christian."

"Who knows? She may have been swimming to save herself. The sequel proved *il y avait de quoi*. It may have been a case of 'cut it off and cast it from thee.'"

"What a hopeless jangle!" sighed Mrs. Eustis.

"If everybody walks off because husbands are not entirely satisfactory," said Mrs. Lorimer, "there'll be a general stampede. I think people may as well stick it out. I mean to."

"But if Thorne is happy," said Mrs. Heathcote, ironically, "he, at least, has nothing to complain of. What more can he ask?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Eustis, "unless a happiness that deteriorates us, as Mr. Ackley says—"

"My dear lady," said her host, laughing, "my opinion isn't worth a farthing."

"—unless a happiness that deteriorates us," she went on, "is not the end of our life, and life itself not meant to be a love-dream."

"He told me," said Mrs. Heathcote, "he had one undying, unforgiving, implacable enemy."

"Who is that?" asked Ackley, taking off his glasses.

"Hamilton Darrell."



THE DANCING OF SULEIMA

By Clinton Scollard

WHEN Suleima, the bayadere,
Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
The fountain spurtled, with mellow fret,
Out of its mouth of jade and jet;
And lanterns, hued like the rainbow's arc,
In the citron branches, dotted the dark;
And over the courtyard's burnished tiles
Cast their shimmer, and made her seem,
With all the glamourie of her smiles,
Like a houri out of paradise
Luring with Lilith lips and eyes—
The creature of a dream!

When Suleima, the bayadere,
Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
Pleadingly the viols played
In the dusk of a feathery bamboo shade;
And the zithers wove their tinkling spells
In tune with her golden anklet bells;
While a tensely chorded dulcimer,
And a reed with the tenderest touch of tone,
Into the melody throbbed, to blur
The whole to a wondrous rhapsody
That lapped and eddied about her—she
Harmony's very own!

When Suleima, the bayadere,
Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
Out of the midnight of her hair
Starshine darted adown the air
From orbèd diamonds; her virgin arms
Showed no cincture of jeweled charms,
But a girdle glistened around her waist,
Where rubies glowed with their pulse of fire;
As light and white as the foam, and chaste,
Were the folds that floated about her form,
Palpitant, gracile, willowy, warm—
A vision of desire!

When Suleima, the bayadere,
Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
Such was the lightness of her tread,
Such was the pose of her shapely head,
Such was the motion of every limb—
Flexuous wrist and ankle slim!

Subtly swaying from head to heel,
 That the hearts of those who watched her there,
 Marked her poise and glide and wheel
 In measures intricate as a maze,
 Were ever after, for all their days,
 Thrall to a sweet despair!

When Suleima, the bayadere,
 Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier—
 For him who had crept so nigh the throne
 That in dreams he saw it his very own—
 The wave of a riotous unrest
 Surged of a sudden within his breast.
 More to him than the monarch's crown
 To quaff from her lips of passion's wine,
 His face in her billowy hair to drown!
 And he swore a great oath under his breath,
 While his hands were clenched like one in death,
 “By Allah, she shall be mine!”

When Suleima, the bayadere,
 Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
 In the lure of her smile was fate,
 In her bosom was hidden hate—
 Hate, and the canker of ceaseless pain
 For her soul's beloved, foully slain.
 So, with brighter blandishment, her eyes
 Burned on those of the Grand Vizier,
 And she opened her arms in witching wise,
 While a sensuous something in her tread
 “All is thine, if thou askest,” said—
 Suleima, the bayadere!

When Suleima, the bayadere,
 Danced for Selim, the Grand Vizier,
 And the last low strain of the music died,
 And the raptured courtiers turned aside
 Through the heavy scent of the citron bloom,
 And the fading lanterns wrought a gloom,
 Making a shadowy bower of the place
 That was meet for love and love's delight,
 Back from an instant's mad embrace
 The Vizier reeled, to moan and die;
 While a laugh, and a woman's triumph cry—
 “Revenge!”—thrilled down the night.



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

SHE—Father is anxious to meet you.
 HE—Which way?

ENGLAND'S PRINCELY KING

By Mrs. Sherwood

THE word prince means much more than does the greater word king; it means a chivalrous gentleman.

Edward the Seventh—may he reign long and be prospered!—has that gift which is the most priceless possession of peer, prince and peasant—charm. He is said to have been a very dear little boy. He was apt to be clean and courteous and ready for his mother's kiss, even after eating gingerbread, while his next brother was always sour, unamiable, and from first to finish unpopular. Memoir after memoir of barons and courtiers mentions this difference between the brothers, and when he came over here, at sixteen, every mother's heart warmed to that dear little Prince, who was apt to smooth down his hair and look boyishly frightened as he took off his hat to a crowd. He had no egotism, no bumpitiousness; he was a sweet, cheerful, healthy boy. "Not too knowin'," as Lowell says in his tribute to his two nephews who fell in the war.

And then he began the life of Prince Charming which he has kept up ever since. It will be a great shame if he ever gives that name, Prince of Wales, which he has made so delightful, to anybody else. It should always be his field mark and device in history, as the "Black Prince" goes down into the future, as himself, and no other.

When he arrived in Paris Le Prince des Galles was his own advertisement. "Yes," said a witty woman, "especially 'gal.'" And on this point Le Prince des Galles has been much maligned. Every woman, young and

pretty, or pretty and not particularly young, or neither young nor pretty, was anxious to consider him in love with her. He did his "possible," no doubt—he was young, he was pleasure loving, he was a flattered prince—but he was not the much-slandered man the gossips loved to prattle of. He was never very far from his Alexandra in England, an excellent family man, to all appearances, always driving about with her; and so long as the Duke of Clarence and Avondale lived his father had him by his side. They would look at each other pleasantly as they drove through the Bois; and when the son died Albert Edward nearly died, too. They have the *bourgeois* virtues, that family. They love each other and their own fireside.

Observe how well the Prince behaved in the Lady Mordaunt case; how he cleared her reputation, which even she tried so hard to sully. Doubtless the insanity that developed soon after this was at work then in her poor, weak brain. She imagined herself worse than she was, as has many a hysterical woman. The letters of the Prince were published, and they did him infinite honor. They were principally about a "pair of muffatees" which she had knitted him; and one of them, notably she, doubtless was very much of a "muff;" but he was a loyal and honorable man, asking her to be more kind in her judgment of her friends, and showing, as he always has done, a very kind heart and a most rigorous sense of honor.

Anyone who has been in London during the last twenty years has blushed to see how an American mother could throw her young daugh-

ter in his path; also has seen the English women almost kiss the earth as he approached, while the deprecat- ing manner in which he has waved his hand toward his gentlemen-in-waiting as much as to say, "Please be seated," indicated that this much beslavered man was very tired of it all. As for his manners, they were always chivalrous toward women. Some of the older men thought him far more civil than was his revered father. Prince Albert thought that kings are made of a superior blood, and it was this foreign assumption that made him unpopular when he first came to England, and as all the writers say, "Prince Albert had to die to tell the world what a very superior man he was."

Now his son has only had to live to tell the world that he is a very lovable, clever man. His great popularity is a testimonial of the highest to his natural character. I remember an anecdote to this effect: I was walking around at a Queen's Ball in Buckingham Palace with a nobleman who had been a gentleman-in-waiting, after being a page to the Queen, and as we came on a picture of the Prince Consort in his fine clothes, I said:

"A very handsome man and, I hear, a very perfect character."

"A very handsome man and a very prudent character," said he.

I asked him to define that phrase.

"I will," said he. "One evening I saw one of the maids of honor over-fatigued and about to faint. I asked the Prince if I might carry her a chair. 'No,' said he; 'let her faint' and," said the nobleman, "he did not care for the people about him, beyond his wife and children, unless they were of royal blood."

"How would the Prince of Wales have behaved?" I asked.

"He would have *run* with a chair; he is full of feeling, and we would all die for him," was the answer.

Everyone in England always spoke of the Prince of Wales in the same way. A few evenings after this conversation I saw him and the Princess at Irving's Theatre. The door behind

the lady-in-waiting was open, and this kindly tempered man got up and shut it, and made her sit down in a safer seat.

Being a lady-in-waiting has not been quite such a servitude in the Victorian era as it was in poor Miss Burney's day, but I declare that I would rather have begged my way in London streets than to have been one even ten years ago. To be sure, the education which has perfect freedom behind it, that training which we get as American children, does not help to make us subservient. The pregnant hinges of the knee get stiffened over here, nor do we relish kneeling to a mere mortal, and there is always something to me slightly suggestive of flunkeyism in the memoirs of even so noble a woman as the late Lady Canning, as recorded in "Two Noble Lives," by Augustus Hare. She describes her trip to Paris with the Queen and, apropos of an occasion, relates that "I and my fellow-servants courtesied as the Queen left and prepared to stand until she returned."

It seems to me that no Queen should have required such an abnegation of self, nor do we at any time hear the gentlemen about the Prince complaining of his ever having made himself disagreeable in that way.

Dean Stanley, in his private journal, or in his letters to his wife, published in that delightful "Life" of his, which is the best reading I know of as a contemporary history of recent England, tells the story of his accompanying the Prince to the Holy Land. It is a long, beautiful picture of the amiability and the sweetness of this Prince, which should be carefully repeated and read over.

As they approached some ancient chapel, into which foreigners were seldom admitted, but which was opened to the Prince of Wales, he seemed troubled, and said to the Dean:

"I am ashamed that this great honor is given to me when it has been denied to so many eminent scholars so much better fitted to appreciate it than I am. I often think

that those born to high station should try more to distinguish between what they owe to their station and the honor they arrogate to themselves."

"I hope Your Royal Highness will always think so," answered Dean Stanley.

And in all his letters to his wife he refers constantly to the kindness and consideration of the Prince. He was a very loyal clergyman and courtier, but he was also very much the Christian gentleman, and as such his personal tribute thus unconsciously paid is of infinite importance.

"I think very highly of the intellect of the Prince, vastly more than I should ever have supposed I should," writes this cautious old gentleman to his wife, as if he hardly dared trust himself to think at all about so exalted a personage.

The same volume describes his performing a marriage ceremony over the Duke of Edinburgh and the daughter of the Czar, which lets in no such light on the amiability of the Duke, but is replete with the subserviency of the English mind to royalty. He says: "As I joined the hands of these two exalted personages I called them by their Christian names. I suppose I shall *never call them by their names again.*"

Now, does not that sound a little snobbish? And what American bishop would ever have said that?

The real cleverness of the Prince of Wales has attracted the attention of everyone who has heard him make a speech. We must also accredit a man who has always shown such infinite tact with very great cleverness. I heard him several times make a speech rather off-hand at the "Healtheries," as were called the assemblages of colonists who came over from Canada, from Australia and from Africa, the year before the Jubilee. The happy and easy way in which Albert Edward acquitted himself on these occasions was much noticed. And one must remember that he was the servant of servants during his mother's reign, sent on all such duties as the greeting of every little princeling who

chose to enter England. As he described himself, "I am simply a little boy to be sent to the cars."

"I don't envy Wales," was one of the gruff remarks of the less amiable Duke of Edinburgh. No one ever asked *him* to do these good-natured errands. But at half an hour's notice the Prince was always ready with an appropriate uniform or a Prince Albert frock coat to drive off to talk to the New Zealanders, who, if Macaulay's prophecy ever comes true, will sit on a fragment of Buckingham Palace and moralize on the past and gone glories of Victoria. He never said the wrong thing, he was never supercilious, he never had the air of "Stand aside, for I am nobler than thou." In the House of Lords he was so courteous to the old dukes and the judges, putting his hand on their shoulders, and by voice and eye and manner urging them to not treat him as if he were of another clay, that it was positively refreshing to see him. And at a foreign watering place, Monte Carlo, for instance, his democracy of manner in the midst of a crowd of courtesying women who tired their kneepans to the uttermost to see who could courtesy the lowest, was always evident. If he caught sight of a lame, shabby old veteran, some half-pay officer who had come to Monte Carlo to live and to economize, the pleasure on his face, his hearty hand-shake, the unpretended simplicity of his good-natured greeting, were unfailing. He said once to one of his intimates that he "wondered how anyone educated at Court could possibly ever become a self-respecting, honest man," showing that he feared the effect of homage on his own character; but certainly it never affected his manner unfavorably.

American susceptibility to patronage is very absurd, but it is, perhaps, something a free born citizen can hardly outgrow. So is our susceptibility to criticism very much too great. Washington Irving refers to it in the "Sketch Book," and advises his countrypeople to outgrow it.

"Why are we so exquisitely alive to the aspersions of England?" he wrote, sixty years ago. And we have but to turn to James Russell Lowell's fine essay, "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners," to learn that even he had felt it. These were two literary men whom England has delighted to honor, who have expressed themselves in good set terms against this superciliousness.

How much do we owe to the man who now wears the crown! How cheerfully we read his most noble letter to President McKinley, thanking him for the appreciation service to Her Majesty on the day of her funeral; and from the coign of vantage of to-day we may go back over a quarter of a century of private recollections and find no American who can recall anything but polite social recognition from the Prince of Wales! No one can remember even a bow unreturned, and it would take a very uneasy vanity to suppose that the charming manner of this tactful man hid any patronage or the slightest sense of personal superiority.

Very much gifted by nature are such men who have a desire to please, controlled by a sense of dignity. The word "fulsome" is the most disagreeable word in the English language. It has made the Anglo-Saxon lip to curl in all countries, and doubtless the royal lip has felt very uppish as some *Malvolio* bowed too low, or some *Coriolanus* from Idaho did not bow low enough.

But the Prince of Wales has soothed every irritated sensibility.

Doubtless to him is owing much of the altered position of Americans in England. The charge against him of having admired American beauty too much has been doubtless exaggerated, as are all the stories of a prince's flirtations. And as the Princess of Wales, that beauty on a throne, has never made any public scandal,

but has preserved her equanimity, we at least, as outsiders, can give the much courted Prince the benefit of the doubt. No one, either, can but believe that follies and extravagances will drop from him now as he realizes that Harry of England could not drag old *Falstaff* to the coronation.

It must be remembered that his royal uncles were not nearly so clever as he is. They seem to have been weak and foolish men. Even the Queen's father, the Duke of Kent, now being rather deified by the English press, seems to have lacked common sense in the mere matter of his pocketbook, and he was the best of them. They none of them had the excellent education which the Prince of Wales has profited by. George the Fourth, poor creature that he was, had something of his charm, but there the resemblance stops.

The Prince doubtless owes very much to the charm, the "simplicity" and the good temper of his wife. The royal pair are alike in their freedom from egotism, which is a great piece of good luck for England.

Lately, death has intensified a personality, adding to it a distinctness, a power, altogether commanding and irresistible, and we are in danger of deifying the human being who has so nobly gained the end of her journey. But life is for the living and not for the dead, and we must remember the noble souls still struggling in the flesh who have in their sphere shown all the virtues and self-abnegation and patience of Christian saints and martyrs.

Fame, power, wealth and royal station—these make a splendid frame for the virtues. But we must not forget the rigorous isolation of those lonely travelers who daily and nightly conquer the misery of human suffering, who will be unrecorded save by the Angel who writes them down in his golden book.



A BALLAD OF TEMPTATION

By Theodosia Garrison

ALL night the Sin that Tempted stood
Beside the woman's bed;
To heel from crown her hair fell down,
As some black pall outspread;
Like flame at night her eyes were bright,
Like blood her mouth was red.

And ever in the woman's ear
She whispered and laughed low:
" You shall not sleep the while I keep
My watch above you so.
I am that Sin men die to win—
And shall you bid me go?

" Some call me power, some call me gold,
Some give a word of shame.
To each man I come differently,
Yet am I still the same;
And each must hear when to his ear
I bend and tell my name.

" And never lives a man but he
Must harken to my quest.
No man alive, howe'er he strive,
But takes me for his guest.
I am that bright and exquisite
Sweet Sin he loves the best.

" Crush what you will from soul and life—
I may not be denied.
Can you go free who think of me
As bridegroom of the bride?
Can you go free who carry me
In heart-beats at your side?

" I batten on your love of me—
I drink of your desire.
From your soul's strife I take my life,
And feed my veins with fire.
Asleep, awake, for my gain's sake
I watch, and may not tire."

Low bent above the woman's face,
 Soft laughed the red-lipped Sin:
 "What time you yearned, had you but turned
 I had lost strength to win;
 But having kissed, can you resist
 When I would enter in?"

The gray dawn shivered at the pane,
 The woman rose from bed.
 "Thank God! at last this night is past,
 For I have dreamed," she said,
 "Such dreams as made my soul afraid,
 Yet are too sweet to dread."

Wan-faced before the Crucifix
 Her 'wildered prayer she made,
 As men may cry to God's blue sky
 'Twixt wave and wave for aid;
 And with a leer her Sin crept near,
 And mocked her as she prayed.



AN OPERA OBSERVATION

MR. OUT-OF-TOWN—I suppose you think these evening gowns shocking.

MR. OUT-OF-TOWN—No, indeed; but I think some of the necks are.



THE FEMININE PREROGATIVE

BESSIE—I think it is Ethel's place to propose to Chappie.

LENA—Why?

"She knows whether she can support him or not."



CALCULATED CARESSES

HER eyes were cold and steady,
 Her ire she strove to smother:
 "You say you'd five already,
 And now you want another?

"They who would give such blisses
 To calculators, let them!
 Men who can *count* their kisses
 Do not deserve to get them."

DOROTHY DORR.

A MONARCH OF A SMALL SURVEY

By Gertrude Atherton

THE willows haunted the lake more gloomily, trailed their old branches more dejectedly, than when Dr. Hiram Webster had, forty years before, bought the ranchos surrounding them from the Morenos grandees. Gone were the Morenos from all but the archives of California, but the willows and Dr. Hiram Webster were full of years and honors. The ranchos were ranchos no longer. A large, somnolent city covered their fertile acres, catching but a whiff at angels' intervals of the metropolis of nerves and pulse and feverish corpuscles across the bay.

Lawns sloped to the lake. At the head of the lawns were large, imposing mansions, the homes of the aristocracy of the city, all owned by Dr. Webster, and leased at high rental to a favored few. To dwell on Webster Lake was to hold high and exclusive position in the community, well worth the attendant ills. To purchase of those charmed acres was as little possible as to induce the Government to part with a dwelling site in Yosemite Valley.

Webster Hall was twenty years older than the tributary mansions. The trees about it were large and densely planted. When storms tossed the lake they whipped the roof viciously or held the wind in longer wails. There was an air of mystery about the great, rambling, sombre house; and yet no murder had been done there, no traveler had disappeared behind the sighing trees to be seen no more, no tale of horror claimed it as birthplace. The atmosphere was created by the footprints of time on a dwelling old in a new land.

The lawns were unkempt, the bare windows stared at the trees like unlidded eyes. Children ran past it in the night. The unwelcomed of the spreading city maintained that if nothing ever had happened there something would; that the place spoke its manifest destiny to the least creative mind.

The rain poured down one Sunday morning, splashing heavily on the tin of the oft-mended roof, hurling itself noisily through the trees. The doctor sat in his revolving-chair before the desk in his study. His yellow face was puckered; even the wrinkles seemed to wrinkle as he whirled about every few moments and scowled through the trees at the flood racing down the lawn to the lake. His thin mouth was a trifle relaxed, his clothes hung loose on him; but the eyes, black and sharp as a ferret's, glittered undimmed.

He lifted a large bell that stood on the desk and rang it loudly. A maid-servant appeared.

"Go and look at the barometer," he roared. "See if this damned rain shows any sign of letting up."

The servant retired, reappeared, and announced that the barometer was uncompromising.

"Well, see that the table is set for twenty, nevertheless; do you hear? If they don't come I'll raise their rents. Send Miss Webster here."

His sister entered in a few moments. She was nearly his age, but her faded face showed wrinkles only on the brow and about the eyes. It wore a look of haunting youth; the expression of a woman who has grown old unwillingly, and still hopes, against

reason, that youth is not a matter of a few years at the wrong end of life. Her hair was fashionably arranged, but she was attired in a worn black silk, her only ornament a hair brooch. Her hands were small and well kept, although the skin hung loose on them, spotted with the moth patches of old age. Her figure was erect, but stout.

"What is it, brother?" she asked, softly, addressing the back of the autocrat's head.

He wheeled about sharply.

"Why do you always come in like a cat? Do you think those people will come to-day? It's raining cats and dogs."

"Certainly; they always come, and they have their carriages——"

"That's just it. They're getting so damned high-toned that they'll soon feel independent of me. But I'll turn them out, bag and baggage."

"They treat you exactly as they have treated you for twenty years and more, brother."

"Do you think so? Do you think they'll come to-day?"

"I am sure they will, Hiram."

He looked her up and down, then said, with a startling note of tenderness in his ill-used voice:

"You ought to have a new frock, Marian. That is looking old."

Had not Dr. Webster been wholly deficient in humor he would have smiled at his sister's expression of terrified surprise. She ran forward and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Hiram," she said, "are you not—you do not look well to-day."

"Oh, I am well enough," he replied, shaking her off. "But I have noticed of late that you and Abigail are looking shabby, and I don't choose that all these fine folks shall criticise you." He opened his desk and counted out four gold eagles.

"Will this be enough? I don't know anything about women's things."

Miss Webster was thankful to get any money without days of expostulation and assured him that it was sufficient. She left the room at once

and sought her companion, Miss Williams.

The companion was sitting on the edge of the bed in her small, ascetic chamber, staring, like Dr. Webster downstairs, through the trees at the rain. So she had sat the night of her arrival at Webster Hall, then a girl of eighteen and dreams. So she had sat many times, feeling youth slip by her, lifting her bitter protest against the monotony and starvation of her life, yet too timid and ignorant to start forth in search of more vivid things. It was her birthday, this gloomy Sunday. She was forty-two. She was revolving a problem—a problem she had revolved many times before. For what had she stayed? Had there been an unadmitted hope that these old people must soon die and leave her with an independence with which she could travel and live? She loved Miss Webster, and she had gladly responded to her invitation to leave the New England village, where she was dependent on the charity of relatives, and make her home in the new country. Miss Webster needed a companion and housekeeper; there would be no salary, but a comfortable home and clothes that she could feel she had earned. She had come full of youth and spirit and hope. Youth and hope and spirit had dribbled away, but she stayed and stayed. To-day she wished she had married any clod in her native village that had been good enough to address her. Never for one moment had she known the joys of freedom, of love, of individuality.

Miss Webster entered abruptly.

"Abby," she exclaimed, "Hiram is not well." And she related the tale of his unbending.

Miss Williams listened indifferently. She was very tired of Hiram. She accepted with a perfunctory expression of gratitude the eagle allotted to her. "You are forty-two, you are old, you are nobody," was knelling through her brain.

"What is the matter?" asked Miss Webster, sympathetically; "have you been crying? Don't you feel well?"

You'd better dress, dear; they'll be here soon."

She sat down suddenly on the bed and flung her arms about her companion, the tears starting to her kindly old eyes.

"We are old women," she said. "Life has not meant much to us. You are younger in years, but you have lived in this dismal old house so long that you have given it and us your youth. You have hardly as much of it now as we have. Poor girl!"

The two women fondled each other, Abby appreciating that, although Miss Webster might not be a woman of depth, she, too, had her regrets, her yearnings, for what had never been.

"What a strange order of things it is," continued the older woman, "that we should have only one chance for youth in this life! It comes to so many of us when circumstances will not permit us to enjoy it. I drudged—drudged—drudged, when I was young. Now that I have leisure and—and opportunity to meet people, at least, every chance of happiness has gone from me. But you are comparatively young yet, really; hope on. The grave will have me in a few years, but you can live and be well for thirty yet. Ah! if I had those thirty years!"

"I would give them to you gladly for one year of happiness—of youth."

Miss Webster rose and dried her eyes. "Well," she said, philosophically, "regrets won't bring things. We've people to entertain to-day, so we must get out of the dumps. Put on your best frock, like a good child, and come down."

She left the room. Miss Williams rose hurriedly, unhooked a brown silk frock from the closet, and put it on. Her hair was always smooth; the white line of disunion curved from brow to the braids pinned primly above the nape of the neck. As she looked into the glass to-day she experienced a sudden desire to bang her hair, to put red on her cheeks. She longed to see if any semblance of her youthful prettiness could be coaxed

back. She lifted a pair of scissors, but threw them hastily down. She had not the courage to face the smiles and questions that would greet the daring innovation; the scathing ridicule of old man Webster.

She stared at her reflection in the little mirror, trying to imagine her forehead covered with a soft bang. Nothing could conceal the lines about the eyes and mouth, but the ageing brow could be hidden from critical gaze, the face redeemed from its unyouthful length. Her cheeks were thin and colorless, but the skin was fine and smooth. The eyes, which had once been a rich dark blue, were many shades lighter now, but the dulness of age had not possessed them yet. Her set mouth had lost its curves and red, but the teeth were good. The head was finely shaped and well placed on the low, old-fashioned shoulders. There were no contours now under the stiff frock. Had her estate been high she would have been, at the age of forty-two, a youthful and pretty woman. As it was, she was merely an old maid with a patrician profile.

She went down stairs to occupy her chair in the parlor, her seat at the table, to be overlooked by the fine people who took no interest whatever in the "Websters' companion." She hated them all. She had watched them, too, grow old with a profound satisfaction for which she reproached herself. Even wealth had not done for them what she felt it could have done for her.

The first carriage drove up as she reached the foot of the stair. The front door had been opened by the maid as it approached, and the rain beat in. There was no porte-cochère; the guests were obliged to run up the steps to avoid a drenching. The fashionable Mrs. Holt draggled her skirts, and under her breath anathematized her host.

"It will be the happiest day of my life when this sort of thing is over," she muttered. "Thank heaven, he can't live much longer!"

"Hush!" whispered her prudent

husband. Miss Webster had appeared.

The two women kissed each other affectionately. Everybody liked Miss Webster. Mrs. Holt, an imposing person, with the rigid backbone of the newly rich, held her hostess's hand in both her own as she assured her that the storm had not visited California which could keep her from one of dear Dr. Webster's delightful dinners. As she went up stairs to lay aside her wrappings she relieved her feelings by a facial pucker directed at a painting on a matting panel of the doctor in the robes of Japan.

The other guests arrived, and after making the pilgrimage up stairs, seated themselves in the front parlor to slide up and down the horsehair furniture and await the entrance of the doctor. The room was funereal. The storm-ridden trees lashed the bare, dripping windows. The carpet was threadbare. White crocheted tidies lent their emphasis to the hideous black furniture. A table, with marble top like a graveyard slab, stood in the middle of the room. On it was a bunch of wax flowers in a glass case. On the white plastered walls hung family photographs in narrow gilt frames. In a conspicuous place was the doctor's diploma. In another, Miss Webster's first sampler. "The first piano ever brought to California" stood in a corner, looking like the ghost of an ancient spinet. Miss Williams half-expected to some day find it standing on three legs, resting the other.

Miss Webster sat on a high-backed chair by the table, nervously striving to entertain her fashionable guests. The women huddled together to keep warm, regardless of their expensive raiment. The men stood in a corner, reviling the midday dinner in prospect. Miss Williams drifted into a chair and gazed dully on the accustomed scene. She had looked on it weekly, with barely an intermission, for twenty years. With a sensation of relief, so sharp that it seemed to underscore the hateful monotony of it all, she observed that

there was a young person in the company. As a rule, neither threats nor bribes could bring the young to Webster Hall. Then she felt glad that the young person was a man. She was in no mood to look on the blooming, hopeful face of a girl.

He was a fine young fellow, with the supple, lean figure of the college athlete and a frank, attractive face. He stood with his hands plunged into his pockets, gazing on the scene with an expression of ludicrous dismay. In a moment he caught the companion's eye. She smiled involuntarily, all that was still young in her leaping to meet that glad symbol of youth. He walked quickly over to her.

"I say," he exclaimed, apologetically, "I haven't been introduced, but do let ceremony go, and talk to me. I never saw so many old frumps in my life, and this room is like a morgue. I almost feel afraid to look behind me."

She gave him a grateful heart beat for all that his words implied.

"Sit down," she said, with a vivacity she had not known was left in her sluggish currents. "How—did—you—come—here?"

"Why, you see, I'm visiting the Holts—Jack Holt was my chum at college—and when they asked me if I wanted to see the oldest house in the city and meet the most famous man 'on this side of the bay,' why, of course I said I'd come. But, gods! I didn't know it would be like this, although Jack said the tail of a wild mustang couldn't get him through the front door. Being on my first visit to the widely renowned California, I thought it my duty to see all the sights. Where did you come from?"

"Oh, I live here. I've lived here for twenty-four years."

"Great Scott!" His eyes bulged. "You've lived in this house for twenty-four years?"

"Twenty-four years."

"And you're not dead yet—I beg pardon," hastily. "I am afraid you think me very rude."

"No, I do not. I am glad you realize how dreadful it is. Nobody else ever does. These people have known me for most of that time, and it has never occurred to them to wonder how I stood it. Do you know that you are the first young person I have spoken with for years and years?"

"You don't mean it!" His boyish soul was filled with pity. "Well, I should think you'd bolt and run."

"What use? I've stayed too long. I'm an old woman now, and may as well stay till the end."

The youth was beginning to feel embarrassed, but was spared the effort of making a suitable reply by the entrance of Dr. Webster. The old man was clad in shining broadcloth, whose maker was probably dead these many years. He leaned on a cane heavily mounted with gold.

"Howdy, howdy, howdy?" he cried, in his rough but hospitable tones. "Glad to see you. Didn't think you'd come. Yes, I did, though," with a chuckle. "Well, come down to dinner, I'm hungry."

He turned his back without individual greeting, and led the way along the hall, then down a narrow, creaking stairway to the basement dining-room, an apartment as stark and cheerless as the parlor, albeit the silver on the table was very old and heavy, the linen unsurpassed.

The guests seated themselves as they listed, the youngster almost clinging to Miss Williams. The doctor hurriedly ladled the soup, announcing that he had a notion to let them help themselves, he was so hungry. When he had given them this brief attention he supplied his own needs with the ladle direct from the tureen.

"Old beast!" muttered Mrs. Holt. "It's disgusting to be so rich that you can do as you please."

But for this remark, delivered as the ladle fell with a clatter on the empty soup plate, the first course was disposed of amid profound silence. No one dared to converse except as the master led, and the master was taking the edge off his appetite.

The soup was removed and a lavish dinner laid on the table. Dr. Webster sacrificed his rigid economic tenets at the kitchen door, but there was no rejoicing in the hearts of the guests. They groaned in spirit as they contemplated the amount they should be forced to consume at one of the clock.

The doctor carved the turkeys into generous portions, ate his, then began to talk.

"Cleveland will be reelected," he announced, dictatorially. "Do you hear? Harrison has no show at all. What say?" His shaggy brows rushed together. He had detected a faint murmur of dissent. "Did you say he wouldn't, John Holt?"

"No, no," disclaimed Mr. Holt, who was a scarlet Republican. "Cleveland will be reelected beyond a doubt."

"Well, if I hear any of you voting for Harrison! I suppose you think I can't find out what ticket you vote! But I'll find out, sirs. Mark my words, Holt, if you vote the Republican ticket—"

He stopped ominously and brought his teeth together with a vicious click. Holt raised his wine glass nervously. The doctor held his note to a considerable amount.

"The Republican party is dead—dead as a door nail," broke in an unctuous voice. A stout man with a shrewd, careful face leaned forward. "Don't let it give you a thought, doctor. What do you think of the prospects for wheat?"

"Never better, never better. They say the Northern crops will fail, but it's a lie. They can't fail. You needn't worry, Meeker. Don't pull that long face, sir; I don't like it."

"The reports are not very encouraging," began a man of bile and nerves and melancholy mien. "And this early rain—"

"Don't contradict me, sir," cried Webster. "I say they can't fail. They haven't failed for eight years. Why should they fail now?"

"No reason at all, sir; no reason at all," replied the victim, hurriedly.

"It does me good to hear your prognostications."

"I hear there is a slight rise in Con. Virginia," interposed Mrs. Holt, who had cultivated tact.

"Nonsense!" almost shouted the tyrant. The heavy silver fork of his ancestors fell to his plate with a crash. "The mine's rotten as an old lung. There isn't a handful of decent ore left in her. No more clodhoppers 'll get rich out of that mine. You haven't been investing, have you?" His ferret eyes darted from one face to another. "If you have, don't you ever darken my doors again! I don't approve of stock gambling, and you know it."

The guests, one and all, assured him that not one of their hard-earned dollars had gone to the stock market.

"Great Scott!" murmured the youth to Miss Williams; "is this the way he always goes on? Have these people no self-respect?"

"They're used to him. This sort of thing has gone on ever since I came here. You see, he has made this lake the most aristocratic part of the city, so that it gives one great social importance to live here; and as he won't sell the houses, they have to let him trample on their necks, and he loves to do that better than he loves his money. But that is not the only reason. They hope he will leave them those houses when he dies. They certainly deserve that he should. For years, before they owned carriages, they would tramp through wind and rain every Sunday in Winter to play billiards with him, to say nothing of the hot days in Summer. They have eaten this midday dinner that they hate time out of mind. They have listened to his interminable yarns, oft repeated, about early California. In all these years they have never contradicted him, not once. They thought he'd die long ago, and now they're under his heel, and they couldn't get up and assert themselves if they tried. All they can do is to abuse him behind his back."

"It all seems disgusting to me."

His independent spirit was very attractive to the companion.

"I'd like to bluff him at his own game, the old slave-driver," he continued.

"Oh, don't! don't!" she quavered.

She was, in truth, anxiously awaiting the moment when Dr. Webster should see fit to give his attention to the stranger.

He laughed outright.

"Why, what makes you so afraid of him? He doesn't beat you, does he?"

"It isn't that. It's the personality of the man, added to force of habit."

"Well, Mr. Stowbridge," cried Dr. Webster, suddenly addressing the youth, "what are you doing for this world? I hear you are just out of Harvard College. College men never amount to a row of pins."

Stowbridge flushed and bit his lip, but controlled himself.

"Never amount to a row of pins," roared the doctor, irritated by the haughty lifting of the young man's head. "Don't even get any more book-learning now, I understand. Nothing but football and boat-racing. Think that would make a fortune in a new country? Got any money of your own?"

"My father, since you ask me, is a rich man—as well as a gentleman," said Stowbridge, with the expression of half-frightened anger of the man who is righteously indignant, but knows that he has not the advantages of cool wit and scathing repartee, and who, in consequence, is apt to lose his head. "He inherited his money, and was not forced to go to a new country and become a savage," he blurted out.

Mr. Holt extended himself beneath the table and trod with terrified significance on Stowbridge's foot. Miss Williams fluttered with terror and admiration. The other guests gazed at the youth in dismay. For the first time in the history of Webster Hall the grizzly had been bearded in his lair.

"Sir! sir!" sputtered Webster. Then he broke into a roar. "Who

asked this cub here, anyway? Who said you could write and ask permission to bring your friends to my house? How dare you—how dare you—how dare you, sir, speak to me like that? Do you know, sir—”

“Oh, I know all about you,” exclaimed Stowbridge, whose young blood was now uncontrollable. “You are an ill-bred, purse-proud old tyrant, who wouldn’t be allowed to sit at a table in California if it wasn’t for your vulgar money.” He pushed back his chair and stood up. “I wish you good-day, sir. I pity you. You haven’t a friend on earth. I also apologize for my rudeness. My only excuse is that I couldn’t help it.”

And he went hurriedly from the room.

To Miss Williams the feeble light went with him. The appalled guests attacked their food with feverish energy. Dr. Webster stared stupidly at the door; then his food gave out the sound of ore in a crusher. He did not speak for some time. When he did he ignored the subject of young Stowbridge. His manner was appreciably milder—somewhat dazed—although he by no means gave evidence of being humbled to the dust. The long dinner dragged to its close. The women went up to the parlor to sip tea with Miss Webster and slide up and down the furniture. The men followed the doctor to the billiard-room. They were stupid and sleepy, but for three hours they were forced to alternately play and listen to the old man’s anecdotes of the days when he fought and felled the grizzly. He seemed particularly anxious to impress his hearers with his ancient invincibility.

That night, in his big four-posted mahogany bed in which he had been born, surrounded by the massive, ugly furniture of his old New England home, Dr. Webster quietly passed away.

II

Not only the lakeside people, but all of the city with claims to social im-

portance attended the funeral. Never had there been such an imposing array of long faces and dark attire. Miss Webster being prostrated, the companion did the honors. The dwellers on the lake occupied the post of honor at the head of the room, just beyond the expensive casket. Their faces were studies. After Miss Williams had exchanged a word with each, Stowbridge stepped forward and bent to her ear.

“Oh, I say,” he whispered, eagerly, “I have to tell some member of this family how sorry I am for losing my temper and my manners the other day. It was awfully fresh of me. Poor old boy! Do say that you forgive me.”

A smile crept between her red lips.

“He had a good heart,” she said. “He would have forgiven you.” And then the long and impressive ceremony began.

All the great company followed the dead autocrat to the cemetery, regardless of the damaging skies. Miss Williams, as chief mourner, rode in a hack, alone, directly behind the hearse. During the dreary ride she labored conscientiously to stifle an unseemly hope. In the other carriages conversation flowed freely, and no attempt was made to discourage expectations.

Two evenings later, as the crowd of weary business men boarded the train that met the boat from the great city across the bay, it was greeted as usual by the cry of the local newsboys. This afternoon the youngsters had a rare bait, and they offered it at the top of their shrill, worn voices:

“Will of Dr. Hiram Webster! Full account of Dr. Hiram Webster’s last will and testament.”

A moment later the long rows of seats looked as if buried beneath an electrified avalanche of newspapers. At the end of five minutes the papers were fluttering on the floor amid the peanut shells and orange skins of the earlier travelers. There was an impressive silence, then an animated, terse and shockingly expressive conversation. Only a dozen or more sat with drawn faces and white lips.

These were the dwellers by the lake. Hiram Webster had left every cent of his large fortune to his sister.

For two weeks Webster Lake did not call on the heiress. It was too sore. At the end of that period philosophy and decency came to the rescue. Moreover, cupidity: Miss Webster, too, must make a will, and before long.

They called. Miss Webster received them amiably. Her eyes were red, but the visitors observed that her mourning was very rich; they had never seen richer. They also remarked that she held her gray old head with a loftiness that she must have acquired in the past two weeks; no one of them had ever seen it before. She did not exactly patronize them; but that she appreciated her four millions there could be no doubt.

Strowbridge glanced about in search of Miss Williams. She was not in the room. He sauntered out to the garden and saw her coming from the dairy. She wore a black alpaca frock and a dark apron. Her face was weary and sad.

"Could anyone look more hopeless!" he thought. "The selfish old curmudgeon, not to leave her independent! How her face can light up! She looks almost young."

For she had seen him and had come down the path. As he asked after her health and said that he had been looking for her she smiled and flushed a little. They sat down on the steps and chatted until approaching voices warned them that both pleasure and duty were over. She found herself admitting that she had been bitterly disappointed to learn that she was still a dependent, still chained to the gloomy mansion by the lake. Yes; she should like to travel, to go to places she had read of in the doctor's library—to live. She flushed with shame later when she reflected on her confidences—she who was so proudly reticent. And to a stranger! But she had never met anyone so sympathetic.

Many were the comments of the visitors as they drove away.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mrs. Holt; "I do believe Marian Webster will become stuck-up in her old age."

"Four millions are a good excuse," said Mrs. Meeker, with a sigh.

"That dress did not cost a cent under three hundred dollars," remarked a third, with energy. "And it was tried on four times, if it was once. She is evidently open to consolation."

But Miss Webster had by no means ceased to furnish material for comment. A month later Mrs. Meeker burst in on Mrs. Holt. "What do you think?" she cried. "Old Miss Webster is refurnishing the house from top to bottom. I ran in just now and found everything topsy-turvy. Thompson's men are there frescoing—frescoing! All the carpets have been taken up and are not in sight. Miss Webster informed me that she would show us what she could do, if she was seventy-odd, but that she didn't want anyone to call until everything was finished. Think of that house being modernized—that old whited sepulchre!"

Mrs. Holt had dropped the carriage blanket she was embroidering for her daughter's baby. "Are you dreaming?" she gasped. "Hiram will haunt the place!"

"Just you wait. Miss Webster hasn't waited all these years for nothing."

Nor had she. The sudden and stupendous change in her fortunes had routed grief—made her dizzy with possibilities. She had no desire to travel, but she had had a lifelong and devouring one for luxury. She might not have many more years to live, she reiterated to Miss Williams, but during those years her wealth should buy her all that her soul had ever yearned for.

In due course the old, exclusive families of the infant city received large squares of pasteboard heavily bordered with black, intimating that Miss Webster would be at home to her friends on Thursdays at four of the clock. On the first Thursday thereafter the parlor of Webster Hall

was just as crowded as on the day of the funeral. "But who would ever know the old barrack?" as the visitors whispered. Costly lace hid the window panes, heavy pale blue satin the ancient frames. The walls were frescoed with pink angels rising from the tinting clouds of dawn. The carpet was of light blue velvet; the deep, luxurious chairs and divans, and the portières, were of blue satin. The woodwork was enameled with silver. Out in the wide hall Persian rugs lay on the inlaid floors, tapestry cloth hid the walls. Carved furniture stood in the niches and the alcoves. Through the open doors of the library the guests saw walls upholstered with leather, low bookcases, busts of marble and bronze. An old laboratory off the doctor's study had been transformed into a dining-room, as elegant and conventional as the other rooms. There a dainty luncheon was spread.

Miss Webster led the lakeside people up stairs. The many spare bedrooms had been handsomely furnished, each in a different color. When the guests were finally permitted to enter Miss Webster's own virgin bower their chins dropped helplessly. Only this saved them from laughing outright.

The room was furnished as for a pampered beauty. The walls were covered with pink silk veiled with delicate lace. The white enamel bed and dressing-table were bountifully draped with the same materials. Light filtered through rustling pink. The white carpet was sprinkled with pink roses. The trappings of the dressing-table were of crystal and gold. In one corner stood a Psyche mirror. Two tall lamps were hooded with pink.

All saw the humor; none the pathos.

The doctor's room had been left untouched. Sentiment and the value of the old mahogany had saved it. Miss Williams's room was also the same little cell. She assisted to receive the guests in a new black silk gown. Miss Webster was clad from head to foot in English crêpe, with deep collar and girdle of dull jet.

That was a memorable day in the history of the city.

Thereafter Miss Webster gave an elaborate dinner party every Sunday evening at seven o'clock. No patient groans greeted her invitations. Never did a lone woman receive such unflagging attentions.

At each dinner she wore a different gown. It was at the third that she dazzled her guests with an immense pair of diamond earrings. At the fourth they whispered that she had been having her nails manicured. At the fifth it was painfully evident that she was laced. At the sixth they stared and held their breath: Miss Webster was unmistakably painted. But it was at the tenth dinner that they were speechless and stupid: Miss Webster wore a blond wig.

"They can just talk all they like," said the lady to her companion that last night, as she sat before her mirror regarding her aged charms. "I have four millions, and I shall do as I please. It's the first time I ever could, and I intend to enjoy every privilege that wealth and independence can give. Whose business is it, anyway?" she demanded, querulously.

"No one's. But it is a trifle ridiculous, and you must expect people to talk."

"They'd better talk!" There was a sudden suggestion of her brother's personality never before apparent. "But why is it ridiculous, I should like to know? Hasn't a woman the right to be young if she can? I loved Hiram. I was a faithful and devoted sister; but he took my youth, and now that he has given it back, as it were, I'll make the most of it."

"You can't be young again."

"Perhaps not, in years; but I'll have all that belongs to youth."

"Not all. No man will love you."

Miss Webster brought her false teeth together with a snap. "Why not, I should like to know? What difference do a few years make? Seventy is not much, in any other calculation. Fancy if you had only seventy dollars between you and

starvation! Think of how many thousands of years old the world is! I have now all that makes a woman attractive—wealth, beautiful surroundings, scientific care. The steam is taking out my wrinkles; I can see it."

She turned suddenly from the glass and flashed a look of resentment on her companion.

"But I wish I had your thirty years' advantage. I do! I do! Then they'd see."

The two women regarded each other in silence for a long moment. Love had gone from the eyes and the hearts of both. Hate, unacknowledged as yet, was growing. Miss Webster bitterly envied the wide gulf between old age and her quarter-century companion and friend. Abigail bitterly envied the older woman's power to invoke the resemblance and appurtenances of youth to indulge her lifelong yearnings.

When the companion went to her pillow that night she wept passionately. "I will go," she said. "I'll be a servant; but I'll stay here no longer."

The next morning she stood on the veranda and watched Miss Webster drive away to market. The carriage and horses were the finest that California could import and raise. The coachman and footman were in livery. The heiress was attired in lustreless black silk elaborately trimmed with jet. A large hat covered with plumes was kept in place above her painted face and red wig by a heavily dotted veil—that crier of departed charms. She held a black lace parasol in one carefully gloved hand. Her pretty foot was encased in patent leather.

"The old fool!" murmured Abby. "Why, oh, why could it not have been mine? I could make myself young without making myself ridiculous."

She let her duties go and sauntered down to the lake. Many painted boats were anchored close to ornamental boathouses. They seemed strangely out of place beneath the sad old willows. The lawns were green with the green

of Spring. Roses ran riot everywhere. The windows of the handsome old-fashioned houses were open, and Abby was afforded glimpses of fluttering white gowns, heard the tinkle of the mandolins, the cold, precise strains of the piano, the sudden up-lifting of a youthful soprano.

"After all, it only makes a little difference to them that they got nothing," thought the companion, with a sigh.

A young man stepped from the long windows of the Holt mansion and came down the lawn. Miss Williams recognized Stowbridge. She had not seen him since the day of the funeral; but he had had his part in her bitter moments, and her heart beat at sight of him to-day.

"I, too, am a fool," she thought. "Even with her money my case would be hopeless. I am nearly double his age."

He jumped into a boat and rowed up the lake. As he passed the Webster grounds he looked up and saw Abby standing there.

"Hulloa!" he called, as if he were addressing a girl of sixteen. "How are you, all these years? Jump in and take a row."

He made his landing, sprang to the shore and led her to the boat with the air of one who was not in the habit of being refused. Abby had no inclination to suppress him. She stepped lightly into the boat, and a moment later was gliding upstream, looking with admiring eyes on the strong young figure in its sweater and white trousers. A yachting cap was pulled over his blue eyes. His face was bronzed. Abby wondered if many young men were as handsome as he. As a matter of fact, he was merely a fine specimen of American manhood, whose charm lay in his frank manner and kindness of heart.

"Like this?" he asked, smiling into her eyes.

"Yes, indeed. Hiram used to row us sometimes; but the boat lurched so when he lost his temper that I was in constant fear of being tipped over."

"Hiram must have been a terror to cats."

"A what?"

"Beg pardon! Of course you don't know much slang. Beastly habit."

He rowed up and down the lake many times, floating idly in the long recesses where the willows met overhead. He talked constantly; told her yarns of his college life; described boat races and football matches in which he had taken part. At first his only impulse was to amuse the lonely old maid; but she proved such a delighted and sympathetic listener that he forgot to pity her. An hour passed, and with it her bitterness. She no longer felt that she must leave Webster Hall. But she remembered her duties, and regretfully asked him to land her.

"Well, if I must," he said. "But I'm sorry, and we'll do it again some day. I'm awfully obliged to you for coming."

"Obliged to me?—you?" she said, as he helped her to shore. "Oh, you don't know—" And laughing lightly, she went rapidly up the path to the house.

Miss Webster was standing on the veranda. Her brows were together in an ugly scowl.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "So you've been gallivanting about with boys in your old age! Aren't you ashamed to make such an exhibition of yourself?"

Abby felt as if a hot palm had struck her face. Then a new spirit, born of caressed vanity, asserted itself.

"Wouldn't you have done the same if you had been asked?" she demanded.

Miss Webster turned her back and went up to her room. She locked the door and burst into tears. "I can't help it," she sobbed, helplessly. "It's dreadful of me to hate Abby after all these years; but—those terrible thirty! I'd give three of my millions to be where she is. I used to think she was old, too. But she isn't. She's young! Young!—a baby, compared to me. I could more than

be her mother. Oh, I must try as a Christian woman to tear this feeling from my heart."

She wrote off a cheque and directed it to her pastor, then rang for the trained nurse her physician had imported from New York, and ordered her to steam and massage her face and rub her old body with spirits of wine and unguents.

Strowbridge acquired the habit of dropping in on Miss Williams at all hours. Sometimes he called at the dairy and sat on a corner of the table while she superintended the butter-making. He liked her old-fashioned music, and often persuaded her to play for him on the new grand piano in the sky-blue parlor. He brought her many books by the latter-day authors, all of them stories by men about men. He had a young contempt for the literature of sentiment and sex. Even Miss Webster grew to like him, partly because he ignored the possibility of her doing otherwise, partly because his vital, frank personality was irresistible. She even invited him informally to dinner; and after a time he joked and guyed her as if she were a schoolgirl, which pleased her mightily. Of Miss Williams he was sincerely fond.

"You are so jolly companionable, don't you know," he would say to her. "Most girls are bores; don't know enough to have anything to talk about, and want to be flattered and flirted with all the time. But I feel as if you were just another fellow, don't you know."

"Oh, I am used to the rôle of companion," she would reply.

With the first days of June he returned to Boston, and the sun turned gray for one woman.

Life went its way in the old house. People became accustomed to the spectacle of Miss Webster rejuvenated, and forgot to flatter. It may be added that men forgot to propose, in spite of the four millions. Deeper grew the gulf between the two women. Once in every week Abby vowed she would leave, but habit was too strong. Once in every week Miss

Webster vowed she would turn the companion out, but dependence on the younger woman had grown into the fibres of her old being.

Strowbridge returned the following Summer. Almost immediately he called on Miss Williams.

"I feel as if you were one of the oldest friends I have in the world, don't you know," he said, as they sat together on the veranda. "And I've brought you a little present—if you don't mind. I thought maybe you wouldn't."

He took a small case from his pocket, touched a spring, and revealed a tiny gold watch and fob. "You know," he had said to himself as he bought it, "I can give it to her because she's so much older than myself. It's not vulgar, like giving handsome presents to girls. And then, we are friends. I'm sure she won't mind, poor old thing!" Nevertheless, he looked at her with some apprehension.

His misgivings proved to be vagaries of his imagination. Abby gazed at the beautiful toy with radiant face. "For me!" she exclaimed—"that lovely thing? And you really bought it for me?"

"Why, of course I did," he said, too relieved to note the significance of her pleasure. "And you'll take it?"

"Indeed I'll take it." She laid it on her palm and looked at it with rapture. She fastened the fob in a buttonhole of her waist, but removed it with a shake of the head. "I'll just keep it to look at, and only wear it with my black silk. It's out of place on this rusty alpaca."

"What a close-fisted old girl the Circus must—"

"Oh, hush, hush! She might hear you." Abby rose hastily. "Let us walk in the garden."

They sauntered between the now well-kept lawns and flower-beds and entered a long avenue of fig trees. The purple fruit hung abundantly among the large green leaves. Miss Williams opened one of the figs and showed Strowbridge the red, luscious pith.

"You don't have these over there."

"We don't. Are they good to eat this way?"

She held one of the oval halves to his mouth.

"Eat!" she said.

And he did. Then he ate a dozen more that she broke for him.

"I feel like a greedy schoolboy," he said. "But they are good, and no mistake. You have introduced me to another pleasure. Now, let us go and take a pull."

All that afternoon there was no mirror to tell her that she was not the girl who had come to Webster Hall a quarter of a century before. That night she knelt long by her bed, pressing her hands about her face.

"I am a fool, I know," she thought, "but such things have been. If only I had a little of her money!"

The next day she went down to the lake, not admitting that she expected him to take her out; it would be enough to see him. She saw him. He rowed past with Elinor Holt, the most beautiful girl of the lakeside. His gaze was fixed on the flushed face, the limpid eyes. He did not look up.

Miss Williams walked back to the house with the odd feeling that she had been smitten with paralysis and some unseen force was propelling her. But she was immediately absorbed in the manifold duties of the housekeeping. When leisure came reaction had preceded it.

"I am a fool," she thought. "Of course he must show Elinor Holt attention. He is her father's guest. But he might have looked up."

That night she could not sleep. She was suddenly lifted from her thoughts by strange sounds that came to her from the hall without. She opened the door cautiously. A white figure was flitting up and down, wringing its hands, the gray hair bobbing about the jerking head.

"No use!" it moaned. "No use, no use, no use! I'm old, old, old! Seventy-four, seventy-four, seventy-four! Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! oh, Lord! Thy ways are past finding out. Amen!"

Abby closed her door hurriedly. She felt the tragedy out there was not for mortal eyes to look upon. In a few moments she heard the steps pause before her door. Hands beat lightly upon it.

"Give me back those thirty years!" whimpered the old voice. "They are mine! You have stolen them from me!"

Abby's hair rose. "Is Marian going mad?" she thought.

But the next morning Miss Webster looked as usual when she appeared, after her late breakfast in bed, decked for her drive to market. She had modified her mourning, and wore a lavender cheviot, and the parasol and hat were in harmony with all but herself.

"Poor old caricature!" thought Abby. "She makes me feel young."

A week later, when the maid entered Miss Webster's bedroom at the accustomed morning hour, she found that the bed had not been occupied. Nor was her mistress visible. The woman informed Miss Williams at once, and together they searched the house. They found her in her brother's room, in the old mahogany bed in which she, too, had been born. She was dead. Her gray hair was smooth under her lace nightcap. Her hands were folded, the nails glistening in the dusky room. Death had come peacefully, as to her brother. What had taken her there to meet it was the last mystery of her strange old soul.

III

AGAIN a funeral in the old house, again a crowd of mourners. This time there was less ostentation of grief, for no one was left worth impressing. The lakeside people gathered, as before, at the upper end of the parlor and gossiped freely. "Miss Williams ought to have put the blond wig on her," said Mrs. Holt. "I am sure that is what Marian would have done for herself. Poor Marian! She was a good soul, after all, and really gave liberally to charity. I wonder

if she has left Miss Williams anything?"

"Of course. She will come in for a good slice. Who is better entitled to a legacy?"

Pertinent question! They exchanged amused glances. Words were superfluous, but Mrs. Holt continued:

"I think we are pretty sure of our shanties this time; Marian was really fond of us, and had neither kith nor kin; but I, for one, am going to make sure of some memento of the famous Webster estate." And she deliberately opened a cabinet, lifted down a small antique teapot and slipped it into her bag.

The others laughed noiselessly. "That is like your humor," said Mrs. Meeker. Then all bent their heads reverently. The ceremony had begun.

Two days later Miss Williams wandered restlessly up and down the hall waiting for the evening newspaper. She made no attempt to deceive herself this time. She thought tenderly of the dead, but she was frankly eager to learn just what position in the world her old friend's legacy would give her. Two or three times she had been on the point of going to a hotel; but deeply as she hated the place, the grip of the years was too strong. She felt that she could not go until the law compelled her.

"I cannot get the capital for ten months," she thought, "but I can get the income, or borrow; and I can live in the city, or perhaps— But I must not think of that."

A boy appeared at the end of the walk. His arms were full of newspapers, and he rolled one with expert haste. Miss Williams could contain herself no further. She ran down the walk. The boy gave the paper a sudden twist and threw it to her. She caught it and ran up stairs to her room and locked the door. For a moment she turned faint. Then she shook the paper violently apart. She had not far to search. The will of so important a personage as Miss Webster was necessarily on the first page. The "story" occupied a column, and

the contents were set forth in the headlines. The headlines read as follows:

**WILL OF MISS MARIAN
WEBSTER**

**SHE LEAVES HER VAST FOR-
TUNE TO CHARITY**

**FOUR MILLIONS THE PRICE
OF ETERNAL FAME**

NO LEGACIES

The room whirled about the forgotten woman. She turned sick, then cold to her marrow. She fell limply to the floor, and crouched there with the newspaper in her hand. After a time she spread it out on the floor and spelled through the dancing characters in the long column. Her name was not mentioned. Those thirty years had outweighed the devotion of more than half a lifetime. It was the old woman's only revenge, and she had taken it.

No tears came to Miss Williams's relief. She gasped occasionally. "How could she? how could she? how could she?" her mind reiterated. "What difference would it have made to her after she was dead? And I—oh, God!—what will become of me?" For a time she did not think of Stowbridge. When she did, it was to see him smiling into the eyes of Elinor Holt. Her delusion fell from her in that hour of terrible realities. Had she read of his engagement in the newspaper before her she would have felt no surprise. She knew now what had brought him back to California. Many trifles that she had not noted at the time linked themselves symmetrically together, and the chain bound the two young people.

"Fool! fool!" she exclaimed. "But no—thank heaven, I had that one little dream!—the only one in forty-three years!"

The maid tapped at her door and announced dinner. She bade her go away. She remained on the

floor, in the dark, for many hours. The stars were bright, but the wind lashed the lake, whipped the trees against the roof. When the night was half-done she staggered to her feet. Her limbs were cramped and numbed. She opened the door and listened. The lights were out, the house was still. She limped over to the room which had been Miss Webster's. That, too, was dark. She lighted the lamps and flooded the room with soft, pink light. She let down her hair, and with the old lady's long scissors cut a thick bang. The hair fell softly, but the part of years was obtrusive. A bottle of gum tragacanth stood on one corner of the dressing-table, and with its contents Abby matted the unneighborly locks together. The bang covered her careworn brow, but her face was pallid, faded. She knew where Miss Webster had kept her cosmetics. A moment later an array of bottles, jars and rouge-pots stood on the table before her.

She applied the white paint, then the red. She darkened her eyelashes, drew the lip-salve across her pale mouth. She arranged her soft, abundant hair in a loose knot. Then she flung off her black frock, selected a magnificent white satin dinner-gown from the wardrobe, and donned it. The square neck was filled with lace, and it hid her skinny throat. She put her feet into French slippers and drew long gloves up to her elbows. Then she regarded herself in the Psyche mirror.

Her eyes glittered. The cosmetics, in the soft, pink light, were the tintings of nature and youth. She was almost beautiful.

"That is what I might have been without aid of art had wealth been mine from the moment that care of nature's gifts was necessary," she said, addressing her image. "I should not have needed paint for years yet, and when I did I should have known how to use it! I need not have been old and worn at forty-three. Even now—even now—if wealth were mine, and happiness!" She leaned forward, and pressing

her finger against the glass, spoke deliberately. There was no passion in her tones: "When that letter came twenty-five years ago offering me a home, I wish I had flouted it, although I did not have five dollars in the world. I wish I had become a harlot—a harlot! do you hear? Nothing—nothing in life can be as bad as life empty, wasted, emotionless, stagnant! I have existed forty-three years in this great, beautiful, multiform world, and I might as well have died at birth for all that it has meant to me. Nature gave me abundantly of her instincts. I could have been a devoted wife, a happy mother, a gay and careless harlot! I would have chosen the first, but failing that—rather the last a thousand times than this! For then I should have

had some years of pleasure, excitement, knowledge—"

She turned abruptly and started for the door, stopped, hesitated, then walked slowly to the wardrobe. She unhooked a frock of nun's veiling and tore out the back breadths. She returned to the mirror and fastened the soft, flowing stuff to her head with several of the dead woman's ornamental pins.

For a few moments longer she gazed at herself, this time silently. Her eyes had the blank look of introspection. Then she went from the house and down to the lake.

The next day the city on the ranchos was able to assure itself comfortably that Webster Lake had had its tragedy.

Of the Tragedy it knew nothing.



TIME'S TRAGEDIES

THEY'D been parted half a year
By the force of circumstances
And the will of those austere
Levelers of young romances.
(I allude to parents here.)

Now they were again to meet
At a party, large and stately,
And their hearts together beat—
Beat as one, but separately.
(Which was surely more discreet.)

She had dressed herself with care,
Though her fingers were a-trembling,
And three times she'd done her hair.
He—to speak without dissembling—
Gave up shaving in despair.

To the ball, while early yet,
Just to see how each one bore it,
Went these two, with souls a-fret,
But they did not—I deplore it—
Know each other when they met!

CAROLINE DUER.

THREE TYPES

ONE woman loved me. She was sweet and shy,
 With roguish smiles and merry, dimpling face;
 Hovering round me like a butterfly,
 Bestowing kisses with a dainty grace.
 But when we faced the future—and she knew—
 With startled, angry eyes she set me free.
 Although her heart was tolerant and true,
 She loved me not enough to sin for me.

Another woman loved me. No dark doubt
 Her heart might vanquish or her spirit tame;
 Blind with a passion that had blotted out
 In radiant happiness all thought of shame.
 Through good or evil she my fate would share,
 Proudly unmindful of the world's decree,
 Willing for love's sweet sake all ills to bear,
 She loved me well enough to sin for me.

Another woman, calm and holy-eyed,
 Cold to all others, me her great heart gave;
 Supremely happy if but by my side,
 Longing in secret to be but my slave.
 She spent her sad, despairing life alone—
 And that she loved me best of all the three
 Was by her brave renunciation shown—
 She loved me far too well to sin for me.

CAROLYN WELLS.



THE ARITHMETIC OF COURTSHIP

STRICT MAMMA—Penelope, what time was it when that young man left last night?

PERT PENELOPE—Only a quarter of twelve, mamma.

SUSPICIOUS PAPA—Huh! I heard the hall clock strike three just as the outside door closed.

PERT PENELOPE—Well, papa, isn't three a quarter of twelve?



PROVING THE OLD THEORY

MRS. CRAWFORD—Does your husband believe that two can live for the same as one?

MRS. GAYBOY—I'm afraid so, my dear. At any rate, he spends all his money on himself.

THE LADY DEMI-TASSE

By Fletcher Cowan

I WAS born, as nearly as I can recollect, on the doorstep of the Grand Châtel in Bleecker street, when that famous restaurant was in its prime. I say that I was born there because it was only when I crossed its threshold and found myself entering into the presence of a seven-course dinner, served with wine for fifty cents, that I really felt this life possessed a future.

My career as a table d'hôte has been an extended one, and when I say this it must be remembered that I have lived as long as the youngest chicken that was ever served to me.

Fate must, in my case, have been originally very kind. Blessed with an appetite that can look with equal graciousness on each and every feature of the boldest menu ever compounded, I was also gifted with a subtle divination that guides me unerringly to those sumptuaries where the board bountiful offers much and asks little.

My love for spaghetti I inherited from my mother, who possessed a nature as sinuously elusive as the material itself, but not sufficiently so to escape my father, from whom I derived my taste for California claret, he being a trader in cochineal. Ah, what wines I have seen the powder of! As I write, a film comes over my eyes and my mind is a-dream with pictures of the old hunger coves, many of which have long since ceased to exist; places in cellars, places up flights of stairs and places through holes in the wall, with dim lights burning ahead as beacons.

I remember one in particular—a cobwebbed back room, with purée-

stained tablecloths, napkins damp from the mangle, chipped platters, nicked steel cutlery and smoking bracket-lamps that dropped oil into the salad automatically. I recall another, with its wall of chianti flasks and the spill-glass in the centre of the table crowded with Italian bread sticks, the latter something to live up to, like the cap-broom of the Plantagenets. I remember its sanded floor and the real live roaches on the walls. And then the French places, with their domestic wall-papers and their *à la Gascognes* and *Bretagnes*, and *Bernaises* and *Bordelaises*, names as colorative as the music of Massenet differentiating the temperaments of Andalusia and Navarre.

Times have changed since then. The sanded floors of old are carpeted; there are no longer any roaches on the walls; everything has become respectable. But mine is a mercurial nature, and I can truthfully say that I have yielded with cheerful submission to the mutations of time and circumstance. I admit that the institution of to-day moves on a broader and more magnificent plane than formerly, and that the butter is better. I confess that a *sauce piquante* is improved by an orchestral accompaniment, and I rejoice at the presence of the electric light, which enables me to detect portions that might otherwise be undiscernible. There is, also, a charm in the multiplicity of courses offered; yet I cannot understand, offering so many, why they do not offer more.

It may be suspected here that I elevate the capacity for the enjoyment of quantity above that of quality. To an extent this may be so. Quality,

I take it, is an attribute of the fancy, pertaining to that condition of prandial vicissitude in which there is so little present to eat that you have time left to rave over its excellence. I have always been a worshipper of the power of matter. The Alps or the Andes produce upon us the effect of awe because of their preponderance. I like a dinner to affect me so for similar reasons. This brings me to my story.

Let no one think me a selfish man. Often in the night I have tossed on my pillow, conscience-stricken, and prayed that I had someone to share with me my meals. Often when, through sudden indisposition or some attack of premature satiety, I could not avail myself of all the privileges I was entitled to, I have thought of the pity of good material being wasted while people in the world were starving. Is forbearance counted one of the cardinal characteristics? It meets with small reward, for I have gone to that same restaurant the evening following my sacrifice, in the prime of health, with an appetite that felt like sweeping everything before it, and found that the law of "choice only" remained inexorable. And often have I resented this arbitrary ruling and aspersed the custom that has the effrontery to suggest two dishes and allow but one.

I am writing of the time when this subject became the dominant problem of my life—how to disestablish the absurd law of "choice only;" how, if perchance I wished to double on my courses, I could do so with all the right and dignity of an American citizen, and no lily-livered *garçon* smirk me nay. Failing to disestablish, then how to circumvent? The answer came simply—identify myself with a companion, and together carry the place by assault! The whole menu would be ours, and we should each get our share of everything. The inspiration came to me one evening, as I sat in my favorite corner by the rolling-doors at the White Rat. I had just gained a lobster with *sauce tartare*, and lost some frogs' legs rampant. As the idea

flashed on me, I laughed triumphantly aloud, until the waiters turned to look at me. But even as I warmed to a glow at the prospect, Caution whispered: "Be careful! you are an exclusive man, not given to dining out with company; you may not find companions to your liking." But, I argued with myself, how can this companion disappoint me? I am looking for no affinity. All I require is a table automaton with just sufficient initiative in its springs to pay its share of the dinner. I do not even insist that he shall eat, though it would look odd if he did not. In fact, a fitful incapacity on his part would be an advantage. It should be a compact pure and simple, to meet, sit down, eat, get up, pay and part; the talk at table to be only that which should be absolutely necessary, such as, "Salt, please," "Pepper, an you will;" politics, religion, poetry and art to be resolutely excluded as matter calculated to distract the attention from the earnestness of the main work in hand. But should I be able to find a man willing to make a business-like matter of what is now so generally looked on as a social diversion? I determined to try, taking care that my overtures, at least, should not betray too much severity of plan. Toward this end I placed the following personal in one of the morning papers:

A gentleman of taste and capacity would like to form the acquaintance of a companion similarly equipped. Object—enjoyment of friendly society while dining out.

Address,

GORGNZOLA.

Box 141.

I called at the newspaper office in the evening, and a letter was handed me. It read:

GORGNZOLA:

Respected Sir—Permit me to answer your personal in to-day's paper. The evident refinement of the writer makes me feel that, at last, I may find myself in the presence of one who will meet a lady as a friend, without using the un-

conventional method of the acquaintanceship to exceed his privileges.

Address,

DEMI-TASSE.

Box 89.

Gentle reader, hast thou ever in thy life, without warning, been hit by a bolt of lightning, tindered out of a clear sky? Imagine my feelings as I read that letter. From a lady! Here was a solution of the "choice only" problem that I had not bargained for. Vaulting ambition had o'erleaped itself, and my little oversight in failing to specify the sex of the companion had placed me in a position tragically embarrassing. Yet I cannot say I was dismayed, for with the consciousness that a lady had appeared on the scene my bolt of lightning, somehow, took on the pleasing gentleness of sunshine. From my cradle I had never been too busy to be a gentleman, and indeed, before I forswore the vanities of this life to devote myself to the science of table d'hôte, I had been reckoned somewhat of a cavalier. Plainly, I was outpointed; but a quixotic something, stronger than sense, told me that the lady's letter must be answered, and that I must purchase a new pair of gloves.

As I considered thus, I was still standing in the newspaper office, not far from the wall of pigeonholes that constituted its letter bureau. It was then about five o'clock in the evening, for I had been delayed in reaching the office by an exhibition of some Claude Monet paintings, that it had taken me all day to commence to understand. I had advanced to the desk to ask for stationery with which to answer my correspondent's letter, when I felt a brush of silk beside me and heard a woman's voice ask of the clerk:

"Is there nothing in 89?"

Gentle reader, hast thou ever in thy life, after a long day that has seemed cold and gray and lonely, felt the warm wind suddenly creep up out of the South with whispers of the Spring? I turned and looked at her, and said:

"I beg your pardon. I was delayed."

Her face was quietly beautiful, and I saw that she was at once attracted by my hair, on which, I may say, up to that time I had spared neither trouble nor expense. There was something about her manner that showed at once the breeding of a patrician—a stately composure, which could not, however, repress the fact that in spite of her inborn superiority she was still considerably interested in life. I shall remember it always to her credit that, no matter what her private feelings were at the first sight of myself, she concealed her pleasure as tactfully as her disappointment. She met me with a gracious "Good-afternoon."

I at once assisted her to a car, to relieve us both from embarrassment. During our ride we came closer together, as people do on a traction vehicle, with the result that, acting on my suggestion, we got off at the art galleries and went in to see the Claude Monet paintings. I had in my mind a little maroon-draped room just off the main gallery where in the subdued light of the closing day we might sit and discuss the preliminaries of our friendship. I found, as we entered the galleries, that my lady was at once in familiar surroundings and thoroughly acquainted with the Cathedral pictures, which she had already seen in Paris. Her knowledge of art was a revelation. She had a command of all the technical expressions; she spoke with confidence and an entire absence of any attempt at effect. Only once did she permit herself to grow eloquent, and that was over Monet's "wonderful *impasto*," which she assured me was accomplished by the palette-knife instead of a trowel. She also decided that many of the pictures that I had thought placed upside down were properly hung. It is a only a step, of course, from art to literature, and in this I found her very strong. Her conversation was most instructive, as half the time I could not understand her. Once, while she was on the subject of Orient-

tal literature, I ventured to ask her what she thought of "Ben Hur," upon which she gave me a look of pity. I saw I had committed some mistake, and to retrieve I mentioned "David Harum." She was still distressed. I spoke then of "Quo Vadis," when she rose, for we were sitting on the ottoman in the little room, and looking about her apprehensively, said:

"Oh, sir, don't! Someone will hear you."

The voice of the attendant now rang through the galleries, calling the close of the exhibition for the day, whereupon I rose also, and to cover my discomfort, suggested that we go to dinner. She apparently forgave me, for she smiled and, as we left the building, took my arm as if she had been used to doing so for years. As we crossed the Park, I know not how it was, but I found myself walking on ether instead of asphalt, and my arm, which held hers interlocked, was a-thrill with that peculiar rapture which means the propinquity of a lady.

We arrived at the restaurant. The place I had selected turned out to be one famed for a dinner *à la bohémienne*. Metropolitanist as I was, the establishment had not come within my ken until that very morning, when my attention had been attracted to its possible advantages by an advertisement on a Broadway cable car. One of the peculiarities of the place was the extensiveness of its menu, which was built on the plan of a continuous performance. The meal was accompanied by music, and a striking feature was that any wine or wines that might be called for were served without extra charge, this being included with the dinner, the price of which was unquotably reasonable. I had decided on this place not so much because it might lead to a discovery important to myself, as that, my guest being a lady of distinction, I must for her sake make the evening a stellar one, and could not better accomplish this than by introducing her to something she was not used to.

How I wish, now, I had acted otherwise! Dear, sainted creature! I meant the best toward her, and I am sure, if she were here to-day, she would be the last to accuse me because the worst befell!

The crush had already commenced, and we worked our way through the maze of people until we discovered an unoccupied table in an alcove room, from which I saw we could have a view of everything. My lady accommodated herself most admirably to the novelty of her surroundings. I thought I detected, at first, a slightly superior elevation of the head and a look of some circumspection, but beyond this she betrayed nothing that could have led me to believe that she felt any way but comfortable, or failed to repose the utmost confidence in me.

Having seated herself and thrown back her neck-fur, she looked about with delicate interest at the characters assembled. There were many of the artist fraternity present and a few literary men come there to study realism. At an adjoining table were some people discussing music, and proving the intangible qualities of that art by frantic gesticulations to make themselves understood. Here and there the face of a business man lent distinction to the scene. The whole assemblage appeared to be entraptly at home with itself. If they were not bohemians, they were trying their best to seem so, and deserved credit for that.

I remarked to my lady, over the *vino de pasta*, that the scene, perhaps, was new to her.

She replied, as the oysters came, that it was; and I knew that the place had character when she said it was different from Delmonico. She immediately observed, possibly because she feared I might misconstrue the antithesis, that Delmonico was very much like Shakespeare—it was so taken for granted you were familiar with him that there was absolutely no glory to be earned by discovering him.

I agreed most earnestly, and ven-

tured that perhaps that was the reason we so seldom went there; at which she looked at me curiously, I know not why, for I had appraised her observation as most sensible.

The waiter had now come with the first service of white wine. It was brought in two peculiar, sword-shaped siphons of glass, which he hung in brass catches on the arms of a gallows-like standard in the centre of the table. The wine from either siphon was taken from the point of the sword by placing the glass to be filled beneath it and pushing up an estoppel, which fell into place again after the glass was filled and withdrawn. The wine being put before us, I lifted my glass to hers and watched her as she sipped. I knew by the purse of her lips that the wine was just dry enough. It was a delicious *Terra Haute* sauterne.

The blue points soon gave way to the *potage St. Julien*, with noodle alphabets and *floculi*. I passed her the bread, and then, for the first time, though we had only reached the soup, I felt I loved her. I felt impelled to find out everything concerning her. Beyond the beautiful diaphane of her character, there was the mystery of her identity which I must penetrate. She seemed to divine my thought, for she smiled and said, as she played with her spoon in the amber of the alphabet-pond before her:

"See! I have eaten two letters out of the Cadmean choke that swims before me—the letters A and Z. The alpha and omega of everything is mine, and I am satisfied, careless of the significance of these intermediate characters that remain. Here, in this soup, rock the power and the glory of the language of the world. Here sway the genius of Shakespeare, the wisdom of Emerson, in indistinguishable pi. Let our characters remain the same, for in truth, sir, we can imagine ourselves much finer people than we are."

If it had not been for the interruption of the *garçon* at that moment, with North River trout, sauce Saranacque, I should have been spell-

bound by the witchery of her words. To add to the distraction, the siphunculi on the table were now recharged with a fine Ohio marcobrunner; but over a sip of this I told her there was nothing I could imagine about her that could approach her rare reality. At this she looked genuinely affected, and after some hesitation, leaned forward and confided to me the most pitiful story to which it had ever been my lot to listen.

She was a lady of competence, residing in a fashionable boarding-house. Exclusive in her tastes and enjoyments, the life sometimes proved irksome to her. Since the loss of her husband she had met no one who could understand her, and she did not care to undertake the education of another man, or go to the trouble of elucidating herself to satisfy the curiosity of other people. She had a natural antipathy to ordinary social conventions, and placed more value on the intelligent affinity of a chance acquaintance than the stupid loyalty of a lifelong friend. She had chosen a boarding-house to live in, thinking that for a lady unattended it would prove an excellent place in which to have company near you in case you should be ill, and far removed from you when well. It was on the latter point she had found herself deceived, for that very night she had been driven from home—and several evenings before—by the iniquitous social persecution known as progressive euchre! The blood rose within me as I listened to the tale, which included in its inhuman category the crime of duplicate whist! Night after night, it appeared, her life had not been what she could call her own. Intercepted at dinner in her exit from the table, rapped out of the retirement of her own room at unseemly hours to take part in these cruel festivities, she was without a place that she could call a home, without a pillow that she could honor with the sanctity of a full night's rest.

"Conceive, sir," she said, with tears in her eyes as she recounted the tale, "conceive my position. Escape has

been impossible. If I leave the house, where shall I spend the evening? I cannot go to the theatre unattended without embarrassment; the art galleries close at ten; and I cannot walk in the Park after midnight without compromise. And this, sir," she concluded, "is the reason I answered your personal."

The garçon at that moment handed me the menu for the next course. The choice lying between venison and Rocky Mountain wildcat, I selected both.

"Rest assured," I then said to my lady, with upraised fork, "that in my hands you shall be safe from your persecutors."

At this her eyes lighted gratefully, and we proceeded to the rending of the game. A rare Sonoma County chambertin was served with this. The bouquet was like the rose garden of an old French convent, the palate attack superb, the vintage thoroughly up to date.

"I do not know how to thank you, sir," my lady feelingly replied. "Tell me now the story of your life."

"My life is what you see it is, just this," I answered, sounding for a vein in the venison and partitioning it; "and ever has been this. Ah, my lady, the things that I have seen and personally digested!"

"Sir, I feel toward you somewhat as *Desdemona* did toward *Othello*—I admire you for the dangers you have passed."

With that she offered me the wildcat, and I knew then I was in the presence of my affinity. Here was an angel with noble across-table sacrifices. Too fine a woman to marry! To gain such a woman as wife would mean the ruin of a beautiful friendship.

The next course was sweetbreads with oklahomaburger, and so on until we reached terrapin *à la* Maryland, with champagne Catawba, *carte d'or*, *brut impérial*. I had noticed by this time that my lady's appetite was not rising to the responsibilities that were being put upon it—in fact, she was beginning to toy with the courses, ap-

pearing to enjoy them while she did not.

"Is the dinner not to your fancy?" I inquired.

She answered that it was more than to her fancy—in fact, had already transcended her most sanguine anticipations; and she inquired, with considerable interest, how many more courses there were to look forward to.

I replied that there was no limit to the dinner, it being practically a continuous one.

I thought her face paled somewhat as I spoke, but the orchestra at that moment striking up an intermezzo, she drew herself together with sudden vivaciousness, and looking about her through the scarves of cigarette smoke, which now enwrapped the spirited assemblage, she remarked on the interest of the scene.

"Yes!" I shouted, above the music, detecting a peculiar abstraction in her manner, and hastening to turn the conversation into as entertaining a vein as possible; "this is the real bohemia!"

"Aye," she answered, pensively, "the land of strenuous enjoyments and aftermath regrets, where everybody believes he is what he pretends to be; where, under the stimulus of heart, food, wine and soul, everything passes for wit and intellect; where you swear eternal friendship with anyone who will listen to you, and then go home with the elate conviction that you are a great man and that the world has at last discovered you. I have met these real bohemians before, though not under quite such extensive circumstances."

The choice now lay between broiled penguin and mallard albatross, and notwithstanding my lady's dissuasive gesture, I again selected both. Then came the star wine of the evening, a Château Muskegon, vintage of half-past-four, December thirty-first, last century. This was served as a souvenir favor, not from the siphon, but in a bottle covered with real furnace-dust. I recognized it at once as a red wine of my father's, made from the

finest zacatilla known in the trade of cochineal, and for many years held in the highest esteem by the stationery dealers of New York.

As we tasted it, I thought my lady grew paler and *distracte*, but I forgave her apparent apathy on the ground that a woman was not expected to be a connoisseur of damask served in fluid form. It was a wine well suited to either penguin or albatross, both of which I offered my lady, and to which she tried her utmost to do justice, with the charming inconsequence of a woman falling to sleep over a piece of embroidery.

"Is there much more to come?" she asked, with sudden plaintiveness.

"You may have as much as you wish of anything," I replied, as the garçon came with the lettuce romaine. "The house extends us the privilege of starting over again, if we please."

"I beg—!" she pleaded.

"You shall beg for nothing," I asserted. "Everything here belongs to you, by right. In the words of Edmond Dantes, 'The world is ours!'—provided we can digest it."

"A wise provision," observed my lady, meekly.

"Be it remembered," I hastened to add, "the art of table d'hôte differs in no way from other arts that depend for their success on the soundness of one's physical equipment. Take music, for instance. A woman thinks herself gifted with a voice, makes up her mind to become a singer, and crosses the Atlantic to put herself under Marchesi. But Marchesi remarks that her solfeggios are impure, investigates, and discovers that the lady is afflicted with throat-cancer, brought on by long-continued abuse of her husband. Needless to say that the lady is dismissed as physically unfitted for the domain of song. A man is afflicted with a tingling in his fingers and assumes himself born to interpret the esoterics of Brahms or Arensky on the piano. He, too, goes abroad and offers Leschetizky the glory of teaching him. But Leschetizky discovers

that the man has only three fingers on one hand and two on the other. He refuses him, and the man is offended, thinking that Leschetizky should have taken him at half-price. So it is that the sustained perfection of any art is dependent on the physical endowment of the individual; and in table d'hôte it is the power of endurance that tells!"

Almost as I finished, I started to my feet. The garçon had arrived with the *entremet*. I saw my lady's face turn to the color of a lily. Her head wavered weakly to express a negative, and she fell limply in her chair. Ah, how shall I ever forget that moment! Her lips made a movement to say something.

"Speak to me!" I urged, and she answered, faintly:

"I think I'll go home to the euchre party!"

We left the restaurant, and I escorted her to her doorstep, by which time she appeared to have somewhat recovered.

"Ah!" I cried, impulsively, as we parted, "I hope we shall meet again, for in you I have met a lady of quality!"

"And I have met, in you," she answered, "a gentleman of quantity."

She went up the steps, and I started down the street, musing over the exquisiteness of her compliment. But a misgiving overcame me at the corner, and going back, I rang the bell. A servant came to the door, and I found that my inmost fear had come true. My lady had expired but a moment before, in the hallway! Several ladies and gentlemen came out of the parlor, all as consternated as I. In their hands they still held the instruments of progressive euchre and duplicate whist.

"You have done this!" I cried to them.

"Not so!" was the general disclaimer. "The lady has not been with us throughout the evening until now. She has been to a continuous table d'hôte dinner. Her last words were—" and they told me the rest in whispers.

Dear last words! Indeed, peculiar; but not untypical of the farewell moments of the rarest spirits, whose final murmurings are sometimes fraught with a vagueness we cannot understand.

And so she passed away. In my heart I have reared unto her

memory a cenotaph, chiseled with these words:

"Here lies the Lady Demi-Tasse, who, at the house of Arcularius, vicinage of Avenue Sixième, after a dinner of seventeen courses, declined the Nesselrode and sought her true dessert in heaven."



JANUS

HE owns no kinship with the gods of old—
The Janus that I know of wile and whim;
And yet I watch as close if gay or grim
His ever-changing countenance's mould
As ever Roman in the age of gold
Questioned the ancient gate, when dawn was dim,
Which, closed or open, so foredestined him
To hours of peace or battle with the bold.

Whene'er my Janus deigns to wear a smile—
This fitful master of each new-born day—
The world is bright, and gladness guards the way;
But when he frowns, his blackness to beguile
In vain I try, disconsolate I brood.
Ah, you, too, know him, dear—his name is Mood.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



AN EASY SOLUTION

MR. NAGG—I wonder how I can get my husband to stay in the house evenings?

MRS. CRABSHAW—Perhaps the best way would be to go out yourself.



SILENCE

THREE is so much my heart may never say,
There is so much my lips may never speak;
Mutely I walk beside thee, day by day—
There is so much my heart may never say—
My love is golden and my lips are clay,
My love is mighty and my words are weak.
There is so much my heart may never say,
There is so much my lips may never speak!

T. G.

THE QUEST OF PARADISE

By Edgar Saltus

HERE are people who charm at sight. There are others who produce sites that charm. There are even some who do both. Dr. Becker is one of them. We never heard of him before, and already we have learned to love him. Dr. Becker is an associate of the United States Geological Survey. As such he has announced a grand discovery. He has succeeded in locating the Garden of Eden. For reasons sufficient to him, and therefore good enough for anybody, he designates Luzon as the spot. Here, or rather there, is the First Family's Midway Plaisance. Here, too, is not merely a grand discovery, but a source of national thanksgiving. In acquiring the Philippines we have annexed Paradise. What have the anti-imperialists to say to that?

The discovery is of a nature to interest them precisely as it must interest everybody; yet particularly, perhaps, Mr. Thomas Cook and Mr. Baedeker. Should the site be accepted as exact, we assume without effort that one of these gentlemen will prepare round-trip tickets, and the other the obvious guide-book. The Story of the Fall, which Mr. Baedeker is sure to intercalate among the usual Hints to Travelers, will, for many, have the force and flavor of a new scandal. The doctrine of Original Sin, expounded in the appendix, all conscientious Sunday editors will seize upon as a feature. It will be new to them, also.

Yet the delights of the guide-book, however manifold, will pale beside the pleasures in store for the tourist. Fancy the sensations which the most

satiated of globe trotters will experience on beholding a tree which is certified to be that of Good and Evil! Fancy, too, the traveler's tales of those who have vacated the Gates! Possibilities such as these are too good to be true. According to Moses, or, more exactly, according to scholastic interpretations of his statements on the subject, Paradise was situated in a garden of gold, of bdelium and of onyx. Arminius put it in a clear conscience, Villon in the eyes of the well-beloved. Dr. Becker has put it on the map. There is the ideal, or, rather, there is progress.

Others, though, have been as progressive. Consider, for instance, the Canaries. *Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blumen?* There it is. According to ancient yet not standard authorities, there, too, was Paradise. The Canaries are the Fortunate Isles, Iambulus says, or is said to have said, for really we have not read him, and probably could not if we tried, and would not bother to, anyway—however, Iambulus is reported to have stated that these islands were inhabited by a set of people who had elastic bones, bifurcated tongues, whose lives were a succession of sweetness, and who, when overtaken by age, lay on a perfumed grass that produced a voluptuous death. That must have been a long time ago. Perhaps, too, the story is not true. In any event, nothing of the kind is encounterable there now. Yet we might just as well have had these islands as the Philippines. Everything being possible, it may be that some day we shall. In which case those whom Dr. Becker's discovery does not satisfy

may betake themselves to the Canaries instead.

Then, also, there is Venezuela. From the Gulf of Paria, Columbus wrote loyally to Ferdinand and Isabella that just beyond was Paradise. He wrote not merely loyally, but logically. In the neighborhood were the enchantments of El Dorado. A trifle to the north were Bimini's Waters of Youth, and, more remotely, stretched Tlapallan, the Land of Colors.

That land of colors is Yucatan today. The enchantments of El Dorado have dissolved in the sultriness of Trinidad, and Bimini's Waters of Youth Ponce de Leon sought and failed to find in Florida. The latter we have, and many of us a few Palm Beach hotel bills by way of reminder. Over the others ultimately our flag will flaunt. In the quest of Paradise, therefore, we are by no means limited to Luzon. Yet though there is a trust in the matter, there is no monopoly. Others have been quite free to pick and choose.

Some old chaps selected Avalon, where rapture was such that a year was a minute. We have not an idea where it can be, otherwise the location would not be withheld from our readers. But it is somewhere. So, also, is Ceylon, where a good bishop said every prospect pleases and only man is vile. So, too, is the Kingdom of Prester John, just beyond which other old chaps declared Paradise to be. Nor is this all. Theologians have placed Eden in Mesopotamia, travelers in Central Africa, ethnologists in Atlantis, mythologists in Limuria, philosophers in Utopia and littérateurs at the Pole—which, to be as cosmopolitan as the rest of them, constitutes, we think, a real embarrassment of choice.

Even so, it did not embarrass Sven Hedin. Last year—or was it the year before?—he dismissed them all, and, quite as definitely as Dr. Becker put his finger on Luzon, this gentleman indicated Janaidar.

Janaidar is a city in the uplands of Asia, to which the Kirghiz look and

pray as they pass. Perched on a peak of the Pamirs, provided with flowers that never wither, with delights that never end, with songs that never cease, it surges above the barren plains a mirage of terrestrial bliss. Dr. Hedin tried to ascend the height on which it is set. Being mortal, he failed. It is as well, perhaps. He has an illusion left. So have we. Always and everywhere there is an abode of bliss. But on condition that it is treated as the Kirghiz treat Janaidar, that it is looked up to, prayed to and then passed by.

Through an inability to imitate the Kirghiz, or, perhaps, because they never heard of them, others have attempted artificial ascents. Among these is Baudelaire. With nothing but haschisch for ladder the ascent was effected; he was there, living in uninterrupted delights, listening to harmonies no mortal ever heard before, contemplating landscapes of amber and emerald, perspectives the color of dream, and with them, perhaps, the lost arcana, the secrets of the enigmæ of the universe, the science that plutonian cataclysms engulfed, the recitals of the genesis and metamorphosis of the supernal, the chronicles of the forgotten relations of nature and man.

Another was De Quincey. In the hallucinations of the glass of "laudanum negus, warm, without sugar," which he used for ascent, there were infinite cavalcades, the undulations of tumults, the catastrophes of mighty dramas, choruses of passion, trepidations of innumerable fugitives, tempests of features, forms and farewells, shuttled by sudden lambencies, by the consonance of citterns and clavichords, by æolian intonations, by revelations of power and beauty, by pomps and glories, until a vault, opening in the zenith of the far blue sky, showed a shaft of light that ran up forever through millennia, through æons; and up that shaft his spirit mounted, mounted, mounted ever further yet, until peace slept upon him as dawn upon the sea.

In addition to haschisch and opium,

other ladders have been used. Among them mescal is citable—not the agave preparation, but a plant which yields a substance brown and bitter, and of which the effects resemble Indian hemp.

Mescal is much in vogue among the Tarahumari, a tribe of Mexican Indians, to whom the plant is a god, approachable only after fastidious rites, the body perfumed with cophal, the heart entirely devout. And no wonder. For, properly placated, the god conducts the worshipper to a series of visions in which he is beckoned into Paradise and then shown out—provided he has absorbed the proper dose.

That dose we have personally lacked the opportunity to absorb, but if we may believe everything we hear—and we are always most anxious to—Mr. Havelock Ellis has. With it he encountered a vast field of golden jewels, perfumes also, on which flowerful shapes convoluted into gorgeous butterflies, gyrated in loops of flame and performed skirt dances before him, providing him with living pictures, or, rather, what he, with perhaps a higher conception of the possibilities of language, calls “living arabesques.” In the background were, he noted, architectural sweetmeats in the Maori style—whatever style that may be—enhanced “with the moucharabieh work of Cairo.”

This sort of thing continued for hours, until, indeed, Mr. Ellis went to bed, when he became, as he expresses it, greatly impressed by the “red, scaly, bronzed and pigmented appearance of his limbs,” particularly—and strange to say—whenever he was not gazing directly at them.

Dissatisfied with the result, he experimented on a friend, to whom he amicably distributed an overdose, and who with some pathos relates that thereupon he had a series of paroxysms which made him feel as if he were about to give up the ghost. He enjoyed a sense of speedy dissolution, accompanied, and presumably accentuated, by an entire inability to resist,

yet quickly followed by an acuter apprehension that one of his eyes had turned into a pool of dirty water in which millions and millions of minute tadpoles were afloat. Then he, too, was gratified with a skirt dance of arabesques that arose, descended, palpitated and slid, for which, however, he was presently punished by a procession of sudden frights. His left leg became solid, his body immaterial, his arms impalpable, the back of his head emitted flames, to his mouth came the burn of fire, to his ears the buzz of bees, interrupted by the impression of skin disappearing from the brow, of dead flesh, of hot chills and finally of a grinning skull.

It is into such byways that the quest of Paradise may lead one. Yet there are others, notably those disclosed by drink. Byron used that guide, so did Poe, so did de Musset. Under the influence of the Yellow Fay, whose name is Eau de Vie and should be Au Delà, they left the world, crossed the frontiers of the possible, and in a swift pursuit of larger flowers, rarer perfumes, pleasures unenjoyed, passed from new horizons into visions brutally beautiful, wholly solid, dreamless and real, where, fairer than the desire of a fallen god, the Muse stood, her arms outstretched.

It is a wonderful journey, but the landscapes it unveils are not suited to common clay. There are colors there to which the rest of us are blind, melodies to which we are deaf, the white assumption of realized ideals. Such things are not for ordinary man. The summit scaled, or even attempted, instead of resplendent perspectives, instead of the pulsations of higher hopes, the savors of life unto life, the odors and foretastes of immaculate joy, there is stupor when there is not horror, delirium when there is not death, Purgatory instead of Paradise. It is a great place, though, for men who want to drown their sorrows, and always will be until they learn that sorrows know how to swim.

In an effort to forget, or, ra-

ther, not to remember, that the end of life is darkness and the font of it pain, persons more fastidious have turned to Love. But that, also, has its defects. In the smart set it is a game, and a very pretty one, too, only when you are old enough to play it properly you are too old to play it at all. In which respect it is inferior to bridge whist. Platonism is much better. The trouble, though, with that arrangement is that either the party of the first part loses her head or the party of the second part loses his temper. Neither result is conducive to happiness, and happiness is but a synonym for Paradise.

Happiness is what we think it is, but only when what we think it is what we have not got. Love is refreshing and wealth delightful. But they don't bring happiness. Even golf may fail. Matrimony, too, for that matter. The happiness of matrimony is not, however, a subject that may be lightly talked away. There are and have been, and presumably always will be, a number of marriages that are delicious. Yet none is perfect. But then, does perfection exist?

Personally, we have heard matrimony defined as one woman more and one man less. The definition seemed to us inadequate. Then, too, it is a long time since the noose matrimonial ceased to be news. The trouble, when trouble occurs, is due to the fact that, prior to the contract, the parties to it display attributes that subsequently won't wash. A learned divine has stated that a woman must have a poor nature who does not, after marriage, reveal qualities that her husband had not included in his conception of her gifts. The husband too, for that matter. And it is just on these unexpected revelations that Sioux Falls was built. Many are the surprises registered there. But the fact remains, however, that never in the history of matrimony has a blind man asked to be freed from a deaf mute. The detail may seem trivial. It is the reverse. When husband and wife resolutely ignore defects, then, and then

alone, may happiness abide between them.

We can't, though, all be deaf and blind, particularly in matters matrimonial. Yet these very matters we have heard praised for the opportunities which they afford in the development of the emotions known as unselfish. Certainly they are highly chastening. But chastened people have no individuality. The big bugs of history were thorough-paced egotists. Cæsar at the Rubicon, Napoleon at Marengo, Carnegie at the Steel deal, did not care a rap for a soul save themselves. Do we not honor them for it? It is of such stuff that greatness comes. But, like matrimony like golf and bridge whist, greatness is not happiness. When Alexander was tramping India in search of the site that Dr. Becker has found in Luzon, an ordinary person presumed to tell him that he was on the wrong road. "The right way," said the person, "is Humility." We have tried the path and discovered, just as Columbus discovered in the Gulf of Paria, that Paradise lay beyond.

"We are all born in Arcadia," said Schiller, who omitted to add that we emigrated at once. But the idea is sound. We are born with a belief in Paradise. The quest of it fills our dreams. The delays in getting there furnish our nightmares. Yet of all those who have sought it nobody has ever got there after the age of forty, or, we may hasten to add, before.

Beautiful as an uncommitted sin, it stretches far away, too far, indeed, for laggard steps like ours. It is not in Luzon, as Dr. Becker has announced. It is not in the Fortunate Isles, as the ancients thought. The artificial substitute does not pay, the Biblical Plaisance has ceased to be. In the twentieth century there is no such place.

These premises admitted, there should be something to take its place, and there is. An epicure provided it. He called it Contentment. Given that, and the possessor can dispense with Paradise every day in the year.

The factors are twofold. The first is health; the second, indifference. The conjunction of these little things doesn't produce Elysium, but it steers one clear of Hades. Anyone who ex-

pects more than that is too good for the good things, and particularly for the bad things—which are often better—with which this world is bestrewn.



DANNY

IT was on a Hallomas
Me boy sailed out,
Flags a-snappin' in the wind,
The gay crowd all about,
And the little waves a-play
And the white ship in the bay;
The music and the shoutin'—
Like the skirlin' o' the storm,
And Danny, oh, me Danny!
In his brand-new uniform;
The kissin' and the cheerin'
And the last long shout!—
It was on a Hallomas
Himself sailed out.

It was Holy Saturday
Me boy came back;
Oh, the creepin', sullen ship,
With the gray wake in its track!
And the flag a-droopin' low
Over them that laid below;
The women sobbin' on the dock—
Oh, Mary, heed the cry!—
And the little child that trembled
When the long black things went by.
Oh, Danny, is it home you've come,
And me here in the black!
It was Holy Saturday
Himself came back.

MC CREA PICKERING.



• VERY PLAUSIBLE

JED—Chollie has just returned from a hunting trip. He says he shot the biggest bear on record.
NED—That might be so. If it hadn't been a big one he would never have hit it.

MY LADY'S CHATELAINE

CHARM and phial, quaintly rare,
 Thimble, scissors, bonbonnière—
 Trinkets such as maidens wear!
 How My Lady loves the jingling
 Of their silvern intermingling!
 How, with all-caressing fingers,
 Over each her white hand lingers,
 Each upon its dainty chain,
 Dangling from her chatelaine!

Trifles, Sweet, are love's decoys!
 Little Cupid well enjoys
 Meddling with such pretty toys!
 Are your lips, so all-beguiling,
 With a deeper knowledge smiling?
 Are your eyes, demurely shining
 Through the lashes, *this* divining—
 Hearts, 'tis hearts you hold in chain,
 You yourself the Chatelaine?

CATHERINE YOUNG GLEN.

PHILISTINE PHILOSOPHY

CHARITY covers a multitude of sins that are committed in her name.
 When we get what we want we are always disappointed to find that it is not what we wanted.

What sounds so sweet as the human voice—to the one who is doing the talking?

The knowledge that virtue is its own reward is what deters many from well-doing.

The trouble with most reformers is that they waste their time and energy trying to reform somebody else.

When a man or a woman asks for a candid opinion it may safely be taken for granted that "candid" is meant.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; and as it is more blessed to give than to receive, we prefer to do the wounding.

Every man regards his own little weakness as an amiable trait; every woman—well, every woman does not admit that she has a weakness.

We always know what we should do under certain circumstances, but unfortunately we never find circumstances arranged to suit what we do.

If women knew themselves as well as they know men, and if men knew women as well as they know themselves—things would be very much as they are.

The stages of knowledge development are: We know that we know; we are sure that we know; we think we know; we don't know whether or not we know; we fear we don't know; we know that we don't know, everything—or anything.

L. DE V. M.

HOW PRINCE MAX WAS BUNKERED

By Henry Morrow Hyde

FORE!" called Mrs. Harry Austin. Then, as she addressed the ball, she stopped long enough to say: "Anne Boyd will be home on Monday morning."

The drive was long and true. The ball cleared the bunker and fell fair on the opposite slope. The player was after it before the group of red-coated girls around the teeing-off place could catch their breath.

"I've the letter in my bag at the house. Wait till I get it and I'll tell you all about it."

Now, each of the girls had carefully treasured, with her receipted bills and other valuables, a month-old clipping from a New York paper. It was dated Berlin, and read:

The engagement is announced of Miss Anne Boyd, of Clayton, Ohio, to Prince Max von Obergault, of Obergault, Bavaria. Miss Boyd, who is the guest of the American Minister here, has been one of the belles of the season. Prince Max is the head of one of the oldest families in the kingdom. He is very young and has hitherto led a somewhat retired life, spending most of his time at the family seat, Obergault Castle, in the Bavarian Alps. Obergault Castle is hundreds of years old, and in addition to its picturesque location is noted for the possession of an underground dungeon, cut in the solid rock, and a chamber that is said to be haunted by the ghost of one of the ancient von Obergaults.

That was absolutely all the members of the Clayton County Golf Club knew about it. When Anne Boyd went to Europe in the Spring, after one of her many quarrels with Tom Fry, they had all felt sure that mat-

ters would be properly arranged on the old footing when she came back in the Fall. Fry was the champion of the club and its most popular member. Anne was loved, or at least envied, by them all. Ever since the Club Grandfather could remember, their marriage at some time in the future had been looked on as a foregone conclusion.

Then came the startling announcement from Berlin. The whole club had taken it as a personal matter.

"Well," said the Green Captain to the Club Chaperon the evening after the cablegram had been printed, "I see Anne has jilted us at last."

"Yes, and it is going to be very hard to give her up."

"Perhaps we sha'n't have to, after all. It won't do for Clayton County to own itself beaten so early in the game."

And Anne had failed to write further details to anyone. No wonder, then, the girls felt that Mrs. Austin was unfeeling to start on the first round of a mixed foursome without relieving the justified curiosity that consumed them.

But even mixed foursomes must have an ending. When the town lights were beginning to twinkle down in the valley and the big fire was lighted in the clubhouse hall, Mrs. Austin came in with her fellow-players. The group about the fire, with an empty rocking chair carefully reserved, pounced on her.

"Is the date set?" cried one.

"Will it be a big wedding?" asked another.

"Well, I feel sorry," began a third, "for poor Tom Fry."

"H-u-s-h!" said Mrs. Austin; "here he comes."

Tom Fry came in, looking fit and red from a hard game.

"Oh, Mr. Fry!" called Mrs. Austin. Then as he turned she got up, took his arm, and the two walked out on the veranda.

It was maddening, but under the circumstances there was nothing to do but wait.

"Tom," said Mrs. Austin, "I had a letter from Anne to-day, and I am sure from what she says that she's not at all in love with Prince von Obergault. It's all a mistake, and I am going to do my best to set it right."

"Thank you," said Fry. "Shall we sit down a minute?"

Half an hour later Mrs. Austin came back to the hall. "Sorry, girls, to keep you waiting," she said, "but I know you'll understand. Here, I'll read you a little from Anne's letter:

"You have probably heard of my engagement to Prince Max von Obergault. The announcement was made, somewhat prematurely, by the Prince's mother, and I have had letters and telegrams of congratulation from nearly everybody. One letter from Tom—

"But there, girls, I mustn't read any more of that sentence."

"Prince Max is very young and has nothing of the dissipated rake or man of the world about him. His innocence, particularly of American ways and American ideas, is really refreshing. You should hear us discuss the proper sphere of woman. Our ideas on that subject are far apart. I think he really prefers the dove-colored, clinging-vine, retiring and shy variety. He is coming over to visit me in October, and I have promised to introduce him to half a dozen girls who, in every respect, will prove his theories false. He has never even seen a game of golf, and I have promised to take him out to the dear old Clayton County links and give him a lesson. Sometimes when I think of the clubhouse, setting there high up on its hill, and of all the good times we have had, I wish—

"It wouldn't be fair to finish that sentence, girls," said Mrs. Austin.

"Do you know, I believe Prince Max thinks Clayton is a frontier outpost, and I shouldn't be surprised if he wore a suit of chain armor underneath his clothes when he comes out next month. I know he considers progressive scalping parties the favorite form of social entertainment in America, with a lynching bee now and then by way of more formal function. Golf, I suppose, ranks in his mind with these. But he is a nice little man, for all that, and the ancestral castle at Obergault is a lovely old ruin. One of the interesting things about it is the family ghost, who is ever so many years old and is supposed to inhabit a little open court in the middle of the castle. Some day I'll write you a whole postscript about him."

Mrs. Austin drove home that evening with John Black, who happened to be Tom Fry's best friend. They were talking so earnestly that the unguided horse collided with a street car.

"I'll write to George to-night," said Black, as they drew up under the maple trees at the Austin house. "I don't know how far this beastly Obergault is from Göttingen, but I know he'll find out all he can."

"And we'll find some way, surely," said Mrs. Austin, with a smile. "We must not let it go any further. We owe it to Tom Fry, to ourselves, and most of all, to Anne."

During the next few days there were a number of meetings at the clubhouse. They were marked by alternate periods of profound thought, deep dejection and anticipatory giggles. When Tom Fry appeared they always broke up.

"What on earth are you people looking so serious about?" he asked one day, coming up to them when the thinking fit was on.

"We are conspirators," laughed Mrs. Austin. "We are fixing things so that you may win the international championship."

It was expected that Anne Boyd would come out to the clubhouse on the afternoon of her arrival, and the

members were there in full force to welcome her home. John Black thought Anne had never looked so well as she did that day. Her cheeks were pink and her eyes shining, and when big Tom Fry shook hands with her, Mrs. Austin was not the only one who fancied she saw a little blush run up to the roots of her hair and then vanish, leaving her a bit pale.

The moon was at its full that week, and it was glorious golfing weather. And in honor of Anne Boyd's return there was a succession of dinner dances and moonlight suppers arranged for at the clubhouse. Tom Fry was all that a defeated but magnanimous lover should be. He went round the links with Anne, and sang duets with her at the club vaudeville.

Mrs. Austin simply beamed approval.

"After all this," she said to John Black, "we simply can't give her up. It would break our hearts."

Black laughed. "Our letter from George came this afternoon," he said. "Sit down a minute and I'll read it to you. The dear man actually left his test tubes at Göttingen long enough to run over and have a look at Obergault Castle."

"And what does he say?" broke in Mrs. Austin, breathlessly, and Black read:

"It's an interesting old place, and I learned from one of the old servants a curious story about it. In 1750, the old man said, the third Prince von Obergault was sent over to Paris as ambassador. He had been brought up as a scholar and a bookworm, rather than as a diplomat. The gay Court in the woods at Fontainebleau, the brilliant costumes of the women, the games they played and the wild, extravagant pranks of the King and his courtiers were too much for him. He came back to Obergault and developed traces of insanity. He shut himself up in an old wing of the castle, adjoining which he built a court with high marble walls and only one door. Here, for twenty years, he was practically a prisoner, spending his days and many of his nights playing racquets and handball, as he had seen them played by Louis XV. After his death the servants at the castle

swores they still heard, at the dead of night, the ghost of the mad Prince beating his ball against the high, white walls. That is the origin of the family ghost about which you asked, and that is also the reason why the father of the present Prince lived almost his whole life inside the walls of the castle. Prince Max was brought up in much the same way, though, I understand, his mother is an ambitious woman and is planning a great career for her son. The old gardener tells me that he has already gone to America. If the unsophisticated young Prince falls into the hands of the Clayton County Golf fiends, he has my sympathy. You are enough to drive any serious and sober man out of his mind, at best, and you will make him think the curse of his grandfather has descended on him."

"We will do no such thing," said Mrs. Austin, with offended dignity, "unless, of course, everything else fails."

Prince Max reached Clayton on a Thursday morning. He was accompanied by three trunks and an enormous German manservant. Those who looked out as the Boyd carriage drove by saw a short, slender young man, sitting bolt upright in the seat, with a small yellow mustache and faded blue eyes, very far apart. When he took off his silk hat, as Mrs. Boyd bowed to Mrs. Harry Austin, the latter noticed that his thin, light hair was brushed straight back from his forehead.

"I know Anne Boyd is not really in love with that man," said Mrs. Austin to herself; "but to-day will tell the tale."

Then she went back to the breakfast table and surprised her husband by half-filling his cup with cream, when she had been five years learning that he took only sugar in his coffee.

"This afternoon," said Anne Boyd to the Prince on Friday morning, "I will drive you out to the golf links. You shall see your first game of golf. To-night we'll eat dinner at the clubhouse, and to-morrow I'll give you a lesson."

"*Jawohl, mein Liebchen,*" answered

Prince Max, who spoke English awkwardly and preferred to make love in his native tongue.

At two o'clock, just as her tandem drove up to the door, Anne came down stairs to the music-room, where the Prince was waiting. She wore a long red golf coat and a short brown golf skirt, showing a pair of plaid ankles above low golf shoes. She noticed that Prince Max looked a bit startled.

"Oh, this coat isn't a bit conspicuous," she laughed, in response to the look in his eyes. "All the girls wear them, and the men, too, for that matter. And as for my skirt—heavens! you ought to see some of the bicycle costumes!"

The Prince himself was in flawless attire. His little patent-leather shoes shone as bright as his silk hat. His pearl-gray trousers were creased with exactness, and his frock coat bulged suspiciously about the chest and across the shoulders.

"You can carry this for me," said Anne, handing him her caddy bag, heavy with its weight of clubs.

"And these—what they are?" queried the Prince, touching with his pearl-gray glove the stained steel head of a mighty cleek.

He was thinking of an article he had read in a German scientific review on the "Recently Discovered and Much-To-Be-Feared War Clubs of the American Aborigines."

"Those are our weapons. But wait, you'll soon see how they are used. The cart is waiting. Shall we go out?"

A groom was standing at the head of the prancing black leader. The chestnut wheeler arched his head proudly.

"Get in," said Anne; "I'll take the driver's seat."

"But not that you will yourself the spirited horses drive?" asked the Prince.

"Certainly. Perhaps you don't know that I won the prize at the Horse Show for the best tandem, driven by owner."

That drive was a new experience

for the Prince. It cannot be said that he enjoyed it. Anne sent the cart spinning round curves and up the hill road that led to the clubhouse, with her leader galloping and the wheeler going at a rattling trot.

John Black, who was sitting on the clubhouse veranda, came down to receive them. He put up his arms for Anne, and she, touching his hands with the tips of her fingers, leaped down from the high seat like a bird. The Prince refused assistance. Slowly, and with as much dignity as was possible under the circumstances, he laboriously clambered down over the wheels.

John Black wore a white sweater, faded brown knickerbockers and an extremely disreputable white hat spotted with large red polka dots. When the two men were introduced, he seized the Prince's hand in his big red paw and squeezed it until he saw a look of agony in the pale blue eyes.

When Anne and her Prince opened the clubhouse door and stepped into the big hall, a dozen girls rushed forward in a group to meet them. Anne, who was slightly ahead, was surrounded in a minute. One after the other the girls threw their arms about her and kissed her cheek. They were all laughing and talking to Anne and to one another at the same time.

Prince Max stood a little in the background and looked on. Never in his life had he seen women so curiously dressed. One wore wide knickerbockers and a shirt waist; another had on a divided skirt, surmounted by a smart Eton jacket; two or three were brilliant in red coats like Anne's, with skirts much shorter even than hers. The Prince was astounded.

Even Anne noticed the strange costumes. Three months, she thought, had made a great difference in the way the Clayton County Golf Club girls dressed. The idea of modest little Mrs. Austin appearing in knickerbockers startled her.

"Why, girls," she cried, "where on earth did you get these clothes?"

"Oh, we've been down the river

road for a spin on our wheels," burst in the chorus. Then, in a whisper: "But aren't you going to introduce the Prince?"

The Prince made a dozen stiff little bows, and the young women responded with curtsies so pronounced that Anne wondered if they were purposely exaggerated.

Then John Black interrupted and took the Prince away.

"I want to introduce you to a horse's neck with a collar on it," he said to the bewildered Teuton. "I don't suppose you have them in the old country."

"*Danke schön*," said Prince Max, startled and bewildered by the attack of the golf girls.

While they were gone the door opened and in walked Frank Hale and Henry Thompson, in their football clothes. Hale was a fair giant, who had played centre rush on the Princeton team, and Thompson was a star player from one of the Western colleges. Consequently their baggy breeches and canvas jackets were veterans like themselves. Grass stains and blood stains, black mud and red clay, were ground into the texture of the garments, and both men had mighty mops of hair hanging over their faces.

They greeted Anne warmly, and then Hale hastened to explain their appearance.

"You see, the Kenyon College team is coming over next week for an early practice game, and we've organized an 'all-'varsity' to meet 'em. Thompson and I have been out to the grounds for practice, and stopped here on our way to town. Can you excuse the way we look?"

"Oh, but Prince von Obergault is here!" said one of the girls.

"Then we will just congratulate you, Anne, and drive along," said Hale.

"Indeed you'll not!" Anne insisted. "Prince von Obergault may not get another chance to see a real football hero."

When the Prince appeared, his color a trifle heightened, he saw the two

burly and disheveled ruffians, in dirty buckram, sitting one on either side of Anne's red coat. He stopped short in the door, a look of wonder in his pale blue eyes.

Anne ran forward to meet him.

"Come on," she said; "if we are to get round the links this afternoon we must start."

Black, Fry and Mrs. Austin walked over with them to the teeing-off place. Anne caught the glint of a piece of flint in the grass, and picked it up.

"Here's an Indian arrow-head," she said, and handed it to the Prince.

Into his eyes came a look reminiscent of recent studies in early American history.

"And that bunker," said Black, pointing to a ridge before them, "is an Indian burial ground. I dare say it's full of war clubs and skulls and all sorts of cheerful things."

The links was crowded. All over the fields the red coats made spots of color. The sun blazed from a blue sky and there was no breath of wind to temper its heat. Anne followed her drives up and down the hills, through the gullies and across the ditches, at a speed that forced the Prince to a most undignified gait.

By five o'clock they had nearly completed the second round. Anne had taken off her coat and rolled up the sleeves of her shirt waist. Little tendrils of brown hair were flying about her eyes. Her cheeks were crimson. Prince Max was almost exhausted. He was not in training for a ten-mile tramp, and besides, a silk hat and a heavily padded frock coat are something of a handicap.

Anne had driven off for the last hole. She and Prince Max had followed the ball and were waiting for Mrs. Austin to drive. Anne was explaining the mysteries of an approach to her panting lover, when she heard someone beyond the ridge at the side cry "Fore!" Then a sudden streak of white cut the air, and a well-driven ball passed within a foot of Prince von Obergault's mustache.

"It is nothing," said the Prince; but Anne could see that he shook a little

and controlled himself only with an effort.

A wild-eyed caddy came rushing over the hill after the ball, and behind him panted Dr. Edwards, a muscular old gentleman who was playing his first season's golf. Consequently he was fluent both in apologies and in the use of technical golf terms.

"Did it startle you, Miss Boyd? A thousand pardons! I was playing from a cuppy lie, you see, and my loftier slipped; I sliced horribly, or I'd never have got over here. Ball almost hit you? Well, 'a miss,' you know. I'm not so lucky. One of Hale's drives struck me in the chest yesterday. A foot higher, and—" He made a gesture to indicate that the result would have been fatal. "And only this morning I was giving Tom Gideon a lesson when the driver slipped out of his hand. It came flying at my head, and I just dodged it. Golf has its spice of danger, you know."

As the duffer lumbered on Mrs. Austin came up.

"I am always expecting to be hit myself," she said, after hearing of the Prince's narrow escape. "I saw in the paper only this morning that a player had actually been killed on the St. George's links at Athens. But really, the serious accidents are very few."

The Prince shuddered. He was thinking of the white cannon ball that had cut a hole in the air so near his head.

"Well, Anne," said Black, as the players walked up toward the club-house after completing the round, "I am glad to see that your right hand has not lost its cunning. You beat Colonel Bogey out at several holes this afternoon."

"Colonel Bogey?" queried the Prince. "A friend, is it not so?"

"Colonel Bogey," laughed Anne, "is the great golf ghost. Mr. Black can tell you all about him."

An eight o'clock dinner, followed by music and a vaudeville performance, had been arranged in honor of Prince Max, and the party, having plenty of time on their hands, sat

on the veranda for an hour to watch the twilight gathering over the hills and the town far below in the valley.

"You are tired, is it not so?" said the Prince to Anne.

"Tired!" cried the young Diana, with scorn in her voice and a splendid gesture of her round white arm. "Tired! why, I am just getting interested. I could play golf for a week without stopping."

The far-away, half-startled look deepened in the Prince's eyes. He was thinking of the white marble court at Obergault and of the mad Red Prince who beat a black rubber ball against its walls unceasingly for twenty years.

"This game," he said, "it is of great fascinating, is it not so?"

"Fascinating?" laughed Mrs. Austin; "why, golf is a passion. Take Mr. Fry, for instance. There was danger at one time that he would become a lawyer. All his friends were worried about him. But golf saved him. Take my case. I am only a duffer, at best, but I've a miniature putting green fitted up in my music-room, and I always serve my ices moulded in the shape of a nest of golf balls."

"Did I ever tell you about young Harkness?" broke in Black. "He was rich, and graduated from Harvard with honors. His father had planned a political career for him. The first thing Harkness did was to get himself elected to the Legislature. Then he happened to spend a couple of days at the Halcyon County Club and learned golf. That eternally bunkered his political career. He lost the labor vote because they said he was a 'dude' in his red coat; he lost the church vote because he played golf on Sunday. Forthwith he threw ambition to the winds, laid out a private nine-hole links, and spends his time, day and night, under the influence of golf. Of course, he is perfectly happy. But his father's opinion of the game would drive a crowd of golf players to mob violence."

The face of the Prince showed an

increasing pallor. He pulled violently at the end of his thin mustache. Black and Mrs. Austin exchanged glances. He felt guilty, but her face wore a blissful expression.

"Go on, Mr. Black," she laughed. "You are really doing very well indeed."

"Dinner will be served in less than an hour," broke in Anne. "We had better go into the house."

"Before we go," said Black, "Prince von Obergault and I will drink a Scotch-and-soda. Fry, will you join us?"

Fry declined, and the two men walked away together.

"This Colonel Bogey," said the Prince; "about him I do not understand."

"You must wait," answered Black, "until you get into the game. Once you have a golf club in your hands you will find the ghost of the old Colonel on every golf links in the world. They tell terrible stories about how he haunts people who have turned back after once beginning the game. But, of course, to men like you and me, ghost stories are simply amusing."

But the Prince's hand trembled as he lifted his glass. The situation had been bad enough before. Women in strange costumes had tramped for miles under the blazing sun, over ground strewn with Indian arrowheads and marked by mounds, over the crests of which Indian warriors might be expected to appear at any moment. He himself had been almost murdered by one of the players. He had seen two burly ruffians, in stained and bloody canvas, received as friends by his fiancée. They had looked to him as uncouth and terrible as the pictures in his histories of the ancient Goths and Vandals. He had been told that golf was a game so fascinating that it left its devotees no room for other ambitions. Now, a ghost had appeared which would haunt him forever, once he took a golf club in his hands. No wonder the Prince took a second Scotch-and-soda before they rejoined the party on the veranda.

The full moon had risen, but the sky was almost covered with black, drifting clouds. A heavy gray mist hung over the links. Fifty men and women, in their golf clothes, sat down to dinner about small tables in the big clubhouse hall. Under the big stairway two Scotch bagpipers, in kilt and tartan, were stationed, and soon the high oak rafters of the hall echoed with the shrill and awesome strains of "The Campbells Are Coming." To the cultivated ear of Prince Max, attuned to the symphonies of Wagner, this was renewed and exquisite torture. He was glad when the dinner was over and the party broke up, to gather again in the dancing hall under the peaked roof of the clubhouse.

There were more small tables, and at one end a little stage arranged for the convenience of the club stars.

Gathered about the tables, the men toasted Tom Fry, the club champion, and the ancient and royal game. Mrs. Austin and Anne disappeared for a moment, and presently the former came out on the stage and danced a Scotch hornpipe, while the Prince looked on, with wonder and amazement growing in his eyes.

When they came back, Mrs. Austin, taking advantage of the laughter, whispered to Fry: "I told Anne about our letter from George—that there was insanity in the family—"

"But what will happen," broke in Fry, "if we fail, after all?"

"Screw your courage to the sticking point," she quoted, "and we'll not fail."

The whole company drank to the health of Prince von Obergault, in Scotch-and-soda, and the Club Grandfather welcomed him as a new and promising recruit to the ranks of golfiacs. The little speech was very witty, and was greeted with a roar of applause. But the Prince himself sat silent, smoking many long black cigars and frowning nervously.

Then there were calls for Black. He walked up to the stage and sang, in a tremendous bass voice, a golfing ballad with a dolorous chorus:

"They foozle in the morning,
They foozle still at noon,
And then at night, with balls of light,
They putt beneath the moon."

Under cover of the applause that followed, Black and the Prince stepped out on the high balcony overlooking the links.

From far below an uncanny sound, half shriek and half laugh, came up to them through the drifting mist. Then the moon broke through the clouds and threw a dim yellow light down into the valley. At the foot of the clubhouse hill they could dimly make out half a dozen ghostly figures. A woman's weird laugh rang out, a club was raised, and a tiny ball of fire shot across the green.

"Bogey!" gasped the Prince, leaning against the high railing of the balcony for support.

"Prince von Obergault," said Black, slowly and impressively, "I am sorry we came out here. What you have seen is one of the things we try to keep to ourselves. Eight or ten of our club members are affected in the same way. Perhaps it is the result of heredity. At any rate, golf with them is no longer a game; it is a mania. Between sunrise and sunset the hours are too short for them, so they put phosphorus on their balls and often practice putting all through the night. Sometimes we are afraid legal steps will have to be taken to restrain them."

It was not a cold night, but the Prince was shivering violently. His eyes, his face, his hair, all had faded into one gray monotone of pallor. Fry was almost conscience-stricken as he looked at him.

"Come in," he said, "and we will have a drink. This night air is clammy."

The big clock in the hall struck one as they entered. Anne was waiting before the fire, and the gay company was fast breaking up.

"Our cart is ready," she said to the Prince. "We will start for town when you get your topcoat."

Fry thought he could see the nervous look in Anne's eyes deepen as she

looked at the distraught young German, who was moving as if in a trance. Then he remembered that Mrs. Austin had told her of the news brought by George's letter.

"What is the matter, Max?" asked Anne, as they started away from the club. "Are you ill?"

The horses were trotting down the hill, at the foot of which Fry had pointed out the ghostly golf players.

"I am of that afraid," said the Prince; "my head—" Then, as he realized where they were driving, he seized the reins from Anne's hand and turned the leader off at right angles to the road.

"Pardon!" he stammered. "Down there we saw the crazy people with the fire balls playing—"

Anne was now thoroughly alarmed. It was apparent that Mrs. Austin's warning was well timed. Not only was there insanity in the noble family of Obergault, but the Prince himself was showing strong evidences that it had reappeared in him. The high cart was bobbing up and down over the rough ground, and the loosely harnessed horses were continually trying their best to go in opposite directions.

"Oh, Max," cried Anne, fearful lest they should strike a water hazard or a high bunker, "let's get out and walk. I am afraid we'll be tipped over."

They clambered down, and, one on either side of the leader's head, started by a circuitous route for the gate.

The grass was dripping with the heavy dew. The fitful moon had entirely disappeared under the clouds, and the gray mist had fallen like a thick blanket over the links. The last light in the clubhouse had been extinguished. It was impossible to see more than a few feet in any direction.

"It seems ridiculous, Max," said Anne, as they trudged aimlessly through the fog, "but we are certainly lost. We might wander around here all night. I shall call for help."

The Prince said nothing. He was utterly miserable and beyond words.

"Help! help!" Anne's clear voice rang out twice through the night air.

Tom Fry, cantering down the club-house road on his polo pony, heard the cry, and in a moment Anne was answered by the dull thud of his pony's hoofs on the turf.

"This way!" she cried, to guide him. Then, as he drew up by the cart, she broke out with: "Oh, Tom, we are lost! Won't you show us the way out?"

Tom Fry took command at once. He helped Anne into the cart and took the seat beside her, after ordering Prince von Obergault to take his place on the pony. Then he drove straight through the fog to the boundary fence. There he turned and followed it to the entrance gate.

"Tom," whispered Anne, as they turned into the road, "I was never so glad to see anybody in my life."

It was an easy drive to town. Tom Fry helped Anne from the cart, wakened the groom and then mounted his own pony.

"Good-night," he said, as he rode away. "I am sorry Prince von Obergault has had such an unpleasant adventure. We don't have a fog like this once a year."

"You must let me get you some whiskey," said Anne to the Prince, after they had entered the house; "I am afraid you will be ill."

The Prince's lips were blue and his

teeth were chattering. He looked a sorry figure, with his rumpled silk hat and bedraggled gray trousers.

"It is not of that I am afraid," stammered the Prince. "It is not that I shall be ill, but—I must not stay in Clayton. To-morrow morning I shall go to New York. I must get back to Obergault. I shall write and explain—"

"Prince von Obergault," interrupted Anne, with a little catch in her throat, "there is nothing to explain. We have made a mistake, that is all. I have been afraid of it all the time. I am more sorry than I can tell, but it is better to find it out now. I shall bid you good-bye now for good and all. I shall not see you in the morning. Some day, I hope, you will forgive me."

Next morning at eleven o'clock John Black called on Mrs. Harry Austin.

"Well," he began, "Prince von Obergault left Clayton on the limited at ten o'clock. Our conspiracy has been successful, but I feel like a convicted criminal."

"John Black," said Mrs. Austin, severely, "anyone with half an eye could see that we had nothing to do with it. Prince Max was bunkered from the start. It was destiny. And anyway, I'd do it all over again in a minute to protect the honor of the Clayton County Golf Club."



REAL HEROES

FOR women whom they dearly loved
Men willingly have died,
Nor deemed it much of martyrdom,
But rather cause of pride;
But name to me some heroes rare—
One name would be a gem—
Who, loving not, made sacrifice
For women who loved them!

E. D. P.

CONSOLATION CUP

(FOR A FRIEND IN THE FIFTIES)

KINDLY I come, old friend and pard,
 To say your lot is not so hard,
 And bid you discontent discard.

A brow when wrinkled looks so wise!
 And though no raven locks one spies,
 Crow's-feet show plain around your eyes.

Your hair, it may be thin and gray,
 But with it zephyrs free can play,
 And barbers work their will and way.

And teeth—no dazzling show they make;
 But what a comfort you must take
 In that you have so few to ache!

As for the eyes that once were blue,
 They now seem somewhat faded, true—
 But many have one less than you.

Not now your cheek the lily shows;
 But what's the matter with the rose—
 The blush that comes and never goes?

Fewer the years we've here to spend—
 But then one's nearer to the end,
 And that is something, I contend,

If follies with one's youth have passed—
 Though not if some that youth outlast
 Parade when the procession's passed.

Ah, well, if life be but a span,
 Perhaps it is the wiser plan
 To make one's years count all they can.

CHARLES HENRY WEBB



DUBIOUS ACQUIESCENCE

MRS. PECK—You were just crazy to marry me.
 HENRY—Yes, my dear; I know I was.

NEVER SAY DIET

By Anthony Savelli

AT Wasserbad, where Mr. Lawrence is ordered to undergo the cure, with the encouraging presence and supervision of his faithful spouse. In their bedroom in the Sulpherischer Hof, at 6 A.M. on the morning following their arrival.

MRS. LAURENCE (waking with a jump at the startling summons of an alarm attached to a cuckoo clock, which, with admirable forethought, she has placed above her pillow)—Morton, Morton, wake up! It is time for you to go and take your first glass of water.

MR. LAURENCE (with drowsy doggedness)—Leave me alone, Martha, do! Can't you stop that beastly bird?

MRS. LAURENCE (cheerily)—Why, it is calling you to your duties. (Sings inspiritingly) “The lark now leaves her watery nest.”

MR. LAURENCE (maddened by the singular strains with which his wife is supplementing the cuckoo's carol)—There, now, I hope you are satisfied. You have ruined my night's rest.

MRS. LAURENCE (unheeding him and throwing back the shutters of the window with unnecessary violence)—What a glorious morning! It's a shame to be a sluggard. (Sings) “Oh, listen to the band” (as the music of an orchestra in the garden of the Kurhaus is wafted in through the window).

MR. LAURENCE (furious)—Shut that window! (Stung into action) There, I'll get up! (Which he proceeds to do.)

MRS. LAURENCE (triumphantly)—So I've roused you at last!

MR. LAURENCE—That devil's tattoo would have roused a mummy! My

nerves won't stand that bird, or that band and you—I've come here for rest and quiet—I won't be—

MRS. LAURENCE (cutting him short)—Come, make haste and dress, or you'll lose your turn.

MR. LAURENCE (feeble)—My turn! Is thy servant a music-hall artist? (Plaintively) Oh, Martha, let me begin this afternoon.

MRS. LAURENCE—Nonsense! the morning is the proper time to begin. (Sings) “Hail! smiling morn—”

MR. LAURENCE—Oh! oh! oh! (Gnashing his teeth) Martha, where are my collars?

MRS. LAURENCE (who, unobserved by him, has been busy with the mysteries of her own toilette)—You won't want a collar; put your silk scarf round your neck. Now, if you are ready, I am.

MR. LAURENCE (aghast)—Good heavens! Martha, you don't mean to say you are coming, too?—and like that! (as she presents herself before him enveloped in a garment closely resembling a Roman toga, with a feather boa round her neck and her head wrapped in a black lace scarf). You look like Medusa.

MRS. LAURENCE—Medusa or no Medusa, I'm going to accompany you to the springs. I know my duty, and I am resolved to see the doctor's instructions carried out to the letter. I am going to walk you up and down while you sip your water. I am going to look after your diet and see that you don't buy things surreptitiously and eat them on the sly. I am not one to flinch, Morton, so come along. (Sings, as she leads him forth to his doom) “Cheer, boys, cheer!”

II

AT THE SPRINGS

MRS. LAURENCE—Dear me, what a crowd! I knew we should be late! To-morrow morning I shall get you up at half-past five. Now, Morton, do you understand what you have to do? You must go and ask one of those young women in that well for a glass of water. Now, don't lose your place—follow these people. Pardon, madam (*as a stout Teuton pushes herself before Mr. Laurence*), my husband—*mon mari était le premier*. *Ne pousserez pas, s'il vous plaît.* See, Morton, there is a vacancy at the railing; slip in and get your tumbler. (*To herself, as he vanishes*) Really, what that poor, dear man would do without me I can't imagine. What an odd-looking set of people! I hope I am dressed enough. Well, dear (*as he appears, dolorously holding a tumbler of water in his left hand*), so you have managed to get it at last! Come and walk up and down the colonnade and begin to sip. What! you can't sip walking! Well, stand still a moment while you drink it. Now, down it goes! (*Sings encouragingly to him, sotto voce*) "Drink to me only with thine eyes." What's the matter? it's too hot? Then blow on it. Try it again. Oh, Morton, what a face! Beastly, is it? You didn't expect it would taste like benedictine, did you? Take a good gulp. Is that better? Why don't you speak? You've got it still in your mouth? Swallow it down directly, Morton. (*Mr. Laurence shakes an anguished head*.) Nonsense; you must, I insist. Pray do not make a European exhibition of yourself. Now (*resolutely*) down it goes! One, two, three and away! (*Sings softly*) "Away, away to the what-is-it so gay— That's right; now we'll take a gentle walk and another sip.

They promenade up and down the colonnade to the music of the band, varying the walk with temporary stoppages for sips. After one of these enforced anchorages Mr. Laurence exhibits signs of distress.

MRS. LAURENCE—Morton, what is it? You don't feel well? What! giddy? Well, finish the tumbler and we'll go back to breakfast. You couldn't eat anything? So bad as that? (*Mr. Laurence, on whom the sulphates are beginning to tell, catches her arm convulsively.*) You'll be all right directly. Give me your glass; I will return it for you. You don't want me to leave you? I must, for a moment. You just sit quietly here and I'll take the tumbler back. (*Which she does, but when she returns Mr. Laurence has disappeared.*)

III

AT THE MIDDAY TABLE D'HÔTE

MRS. LAURENCE (*as they take their seats vis-à-vis at one of the little tables in the dining-room of the hotel*)—Well, Morton, I hope you have got up an appetite.

MR. LAURENCE (*with a sickly smile*)—Appetite! I feel as if I should never eat again.

MRS. LAURENCE—Nonsense, my dear, you'll soon find that you are very hungry. I've got a list in my bag of all the different things you are not to eat, and I shall insist on your following the doctor's orders. What have we here? (*as the waiter plumps before each of them a soup plate of colored hot water with letters of the alphabet in white paste floating about*) *potage*, eh?

MR. LAURENCE (*who feels that if there is anything he could swallow it would be a spoonful of soup*)—I think I could manage a little of this.

MRS. LAURENCE (*after consulting the dietary*)—No, Morton, no! Soup is taboo. (*To the waiter*) Take it away; *nicht gut pour monsieur* (*with a significant look in the direction of Mr. Laurence*).

MR. LAURENCE (*whose spirit is subdued by suffering*)—Oh, Martha! I do think that would have done me good. I fancied it.

MRS. LAURENCE—I am not going to allow you to jeopardize your cure by any foolish fancies. (*Consolingly*)

It was not at all good. Ah! here is the fish! You may have any fish you like except—let me see (*looking on her list*)—except salmon. Why, I do believe this is salmon! (*As two portions of trout are placed before them by the waiter, she asks, anxiously*) Was ist das? salmon? saumon? (*The waiter shakes his Teutonic head dubiously.*) What is the German for salmon, Morton? You don't know? you who pretend to understand Wagner without a book! This must be a salmon, it is so pink. (*With her mouth full*) It is delicious. I'll eat your share. I won't have you poison yourself for any nonsense. You're faint? Here! (*diving into her bag and producing a couple of rusks*) eat these; I bought them at the baker's for you; they are especially for invalids. Try one.

MR. LAURENCE (*sullenly*)—I won't. You'll starve me to death, Martha, if you go on like this. I am really beginning to feel that I want food.

MRS. LAURENCE (*in rallying tones*)—Well, dear, we'll see what the next course is. They ought not to have things you can't eat. Here comes the entrée, I suppose. (*As the waiter with pantomimic agility changes their plates*) A salmi of bird; it smells very good. I wonder what it is and whether you may eat it. (*To the imperturbable waiter:*) Is dat gut pour malades?

THE WAITER—Jawohl! Ganz gut! ganz gut!

MRS. LAURENCE (*helping herself largely*)—He says it is ganz. What is the English for ganz, Morton?

MR. LAURENCE (*eager to vindicate his reputation as a German scholar*)—Why, goose, to be sure. (*Feels he has scored.*)

MRS. LAURENCE (*startled*)—Goose? I do believe that is one of the things you are forbidden to touch. Let me see (*referring to her schedule*). It is. Nein! nein! nein! (*to the bewildered waiter, who is proffering a dish to Mr. Laurence.*)

MR. LAURENCE (*bitterly regretting his unfortunate translation*)—Martha, I must have some.

MRS. LAURENCE (*resolutely*)—You sha'n't.

MR. LAURENCE (*savagely*)—I will, if I die for it.

MRS. LAURENCE (*violently, to the waiter*)—Go! Allez! allez! (*accompanied by a peremptory gesture of dismissal, of which the waiter avails himself.*)

MR. LAURENCE (*pulling himself together and glaring at her*)—Martha, how long is this to last?

MRS. LAURENCE (*braving it out*)—How long is what to last?

MR. LAURENCE—This persecution—this torture. Why, I am actually hungry, and you refuse me food. You are a female Torquemada.

MRS. LAURENCE (*with an angelic smile*)—Call me whatever your good taste prompts you, Morton, I care not. I am simply doing my duty.

MR. LAURENCE (*scathingly*)—Which is to deny your husband the necessities of life. (*Wildly*) Good old Duty!

MRS. LAURENCE—Morton, I am ashamed of you, giving way like this the first day. Think of how many noble men and women have gone through it all before you without a murmur! Oh! if these springs could speak!

MR. LAURENCE (*in a sudden spasm*)—Martha, I think I am dying.

MRS. LAURENCE—Wait a moment, dear, and let us see what is coming. (*The waiter appears, poising a plate on his fingers. To him, eagerly*) Was ist das?

THE WAITER (*vauntingly*)—Rosbif.

MRS. LAURENCE (*jubilantly*)—There, Morton, you may eat that. Never say die to me again!

MR. LAURENCE (*seizing a plate*)—And never say diet again to me. Waiter, some sparkling Moselle.

MRS. LAURENCE—Morton, the cure!

MR. LAURENCE (*audaciously*)—Damn the cure!



BALLADE OF BELINDA

I TOOK Belinda with me when
 The springing grass was wet with dew,
 Fishing for trout a-down the glen
 Where horns of elf-land faintly blew;
 Although the trout we caught were few,
 The day full joyously was spent.
 Yet oft I wondered if I knew
 Just what it was Belinda meant.

As lightly perched as any wren,
 Across the pool her glances flew,
 While I, bewitched beyond my ken—
 My line and thoughts went all askew;
 A shyness I could not construe
 Fresh charm to her demeanor lent,
 Till much I wondered if I knew
 Just what it was Belinda meant.

I pondered long on this, and then
 My arms about her waist I threw
 And kissed her once, and once again;
 Her cheeks were dyed a rosy hue,
 While closer to my side she drew
 And lingered there in sweet content,
 Showing me plainly that I knew
 Just what it was Belinda meant.

ENVOY

When beauty at your side you view,
 Prince, pray you, be not indolent,
 But capture love while it is new—
 Just what it was Belinda meant!

WINTHROP PACKARD.



RARÆ AVES

“WHOLE-SOULED people, the Smiths!”
 “And well heeled, too!”



I SN'T love in a \$50,000 cottage a regular cottage pudding?

DEBTORS TO HERITAGE

By Edgar Fawcett

AT Oxford he found himself disliked. For a time he could not understand this; it bewildered him. What had his co-disciples against him?

He was tall, of symmetric build, with a face cut in comely lines. His habits were of the cleanliest; he wore his clothes, that were always neat of fit, with grace and ease. In his studies he soon won praise from instructors; as an oarsman he excelled for skill. It was known that some day he would be the thirteenth baronet of an ancient line. His chambers were bright and comfortable, though not in any way suggesting the great wealth to which, as Sir Stuart Olyphant's nephew and heir, he was destined successor. And yet, after six months' sojourn at lovely old Magdalen College, it became bitingly manifest to him that he was disliked by nearly everybody.

In a quiet fit of exasperation he repaired, on a certain day, to his dressing-room, and stood there before a long mirror. Surely, he concluded, there was nothing unattractive in his appearance. He smiled, and the smile at once struck him as somehow curiously hard. It was not only mirthless, but it lacked all hint of the kindlier element. In its chill artificiality both satire and cynicism seemed to lodge.

"Am I cynical?" he asked himself.

Then all his past life made through memory a kind of panoramic sweep. He seemed like one who stands behind a magic lantern and sees view after view projected on the blank that it confronts. Down in Norfolkshire, at his uncle's beautiful old

estate of Invermere, he had passed all his childhood, boyhood and early youth, except a year and a half spent traveling over Europe with his two tutors. Actual society of any sort he had almost wholly lacked until his advent at Oxford. What, in those many years, had been his mode of deportment? Had he ever quarreled with his tutors? Yes, countless times. Had he ever come to blows with either of them? Yes, repeatedly. Had they threatened to leave him? Yes, on more occasions than one. Was not their continuance at Invermere accounted for by the very liberal salaries that they drew from his paralytic old uncle, who had lingered on for many years, and was lingering still, in a darkened room of the stately old house, sometimes not seeing his nephew for a whole fortnight at a time?

Soon came other self-questionings, more drastic still. Had these two men, both cultured and well-mannered, ever accused him of indolence as a scholar? No. Had they denounced him as rude and hobbledehoyish? Yes. What had always been their chief charge against him? Absolute concentration in self, absolute indifference toward every fellow-creature. Had they accused him of unbecoming conduct toward the servants at Invermere? Again and again they had so accused him. To the housekeeper he had been often savagely rude; to the maid-servants he had so harshly deported himself, at times, that many of them, through past years, had left in high dudgeon. With the grooms he had wrought a constant havoc of disagreement. . . .

All this assailed him, burned in on him now. He had never realized it, never given it more than a passing thought, before coming to college and finding these evidences of antipathy.

He sank into a chair. His heart, of whose palpitations a young and vigorous frame had never previously felt a sign, was now thumping against his side. Why, he questioned himself, should they have treated him thus cavalierly here at Oxford? His past must abide, beyond doubt, a sealed book to them. There must be some reason for their avoidance, their disapprobation. He rose, remembering that he had asked his Norfolkshire kinsman and only real friend—if “friend” were the right term—to drop in and have tea with him that afternoon.

Entering his pretty and modish dining-room, he was soon greeted by Adair. Perhaps Adair was just then the most popular man at Magdalen. He was big and raw-boned, with an erratic nose, a stolid chin and beautiful, dark-blue, sympathetic eyes. He dressed half-rowdily, at times, but his linen was always flawless; he wore his hair too long, and it was always rather tossed and tumbled, but its hue was of the richest amber and its texture the finest and silkiest.

“I asked Gosford and two or three other men to drop in,” said Olyphant, after he and Adair were seated together, “but each had something else to do. I’m rather glad, all in all, that it happened so.” He gave his voice a lingering, significant inflection that almost dragged from Adair a half-startled “Why?”

“Oh, because,” Olyphant answered, “I wanted you to myself for a little while.” He sipped his tea quickly. “I’ll answer your ‘why’ with another, Malcolm. Why am I so unpopular here at Oxford? Tell me; I immensely want to know.”

Adair looked at him with amazement, which rapidly changed into gentle sadness.

“Really, Philip, old chap, I——”

“Don’t be afraid of wounding

me,” Philip broke in. Entreaty now filled his tones. “I’m sure that you’ll never do that unless it is necessary, and I promise to take from you anything, *anything*, feeling confident that you’ll deal with me only in the frankest, fairest, kindliest spirit.”

Adair rose and folded his big arms over his big chest. He began to roam the room, at first in silence. When he spoke, in his tones were both reluctance and regret.

“The truth is, Philip, you have somehow spread abroad the impression that you are selfish and cruel. I have seen popular men who were secretly both, and unpopular men who were neither. In our dealings with one another, as I have often thought, we are all of us, more or less, unconscious hypocrites. We never let folks know us precisely as we are; we show them an image inevitably distorted. In your case the image displeases. Perhaps, when you first came here, it did not strike you as any matter claiming your personal compassion that poor Jack Wainwright, whose father had recently gone all to pieces on the Stock Exchange, hated most bitterly to part with these chambers. And yet it is told of you that, although the subscription a few kind friends were raising for him had reached your knowledge, the situation of the chambers, overlooking this delightful park full of deer, with a glimpse of our famed Addison Walk as well, so appealed to you that you at once made a crushingly large offer, and buried Jack, so to speak, under the avalanche of your guineas.”

Philip toyed with a teaspoon, his hand trembling a little. “This man, Wainwright, was a stranger to me——”

“And has remained so ever since. Oh, I grant, universities are provincial places. But there were other apartments to be had at Magdalen, and—well, his friends felt it and feel it still. Then there is this,” pursued Adair, very placidly, and he recounted a similar episode. “And this,” he went on, recounting an-

other. "My dear Philip," he went on, reseating himself, after a pause, and refilling his teacup, "you have requested certain 'reasons,' and I fear I have given you some with far too unrestricted a vividness. But thus far I have dealt only in tangible, definitive acts. However, I may have passed the limit of both your patience and your sanction. If so—"

"Not at all, Malcolm. Pray go on."

"Let me now speak, since you permit me, of what the men here refer to as your 'manner.'"

"Ah!" murmured Philip; "they think me ill-bred?"

"They think you ungenial. More, they think you—I must revert to my former word—cruel."

"Cruel? how?"

"In your constant little thrusts and stabs. You say sharp, cold, satiric, personal things. Now you make them wonder if you intend to be rude. Again you convince them that you have intended to be rude, while cleverly shirking the charge of actual impudence. Innuendo is forever ascribed to you nowadays, and I assure you that there is hardly a man of your acquaintance to whom you can say 'good-morning' without having him suspect some furtive sarcasm behind the salutation. Let me go one step further, and then my disagreeable task will be done. On several occasions, as I happen very surely to know, you have been on the verge of a serious quarrel, and with men whose open dislike, whether expressed in words or blows, would make your future residence here an absolute misery—would render it, indeed, a question of either remaining here, cut by almost the entire college, or ceasing to dwell inside its walls . . ."

When Adair had left him, that afternoon, Philip sat for some time with head bowed on his breast and hands tense-knotted at his sides. On a sudden he sprang up; the room, dimming with twilight, swam round him. He seized some choice flowers

from a vase and tore them to shreds; then he seized the vase itself, a fine bit of tinted porcelain, dashed its water hissing on some half-burned logs in the hearthplace, and afterward raised it, missile-like, over against the Venetian mirror just above the mantel. In another second he would have hurled it, with silly self-abandonment, straight at the limpid oval of this rare glass. But his arm dropped betimes, and the flush on his cheek turned to pallor.

It was one of those old, destructive moods. His nurses in childhood, his tutors of a later day, and not a few of the servants at Olyphant Hall could tell of them. When, as a little boy, they attacked him, it was thought that they indicated some growing congenital madness. But later they had become less furious, and for surely ten years past had yielded to those efforts of control which watchful training and constant advice had engendered.

Very quietly, a minute later, Philip put the vase back on the table. He felt chilled to the bone, and warmed his trembling hands before the fire. He felt horribly ashamed, too, and despondent past words. "I—I thought all *that*," he muttered, "had passed forever. Here, in this ancient Oxford, they used, not so very long ago, to believe men were possessed by devils. Well, in a sense were they not right? But I thought mine was exorcised. It seems as if he were still there, though. And yet this time I fought him, thank God, and floored him flat!"

He turned from the fireplace, flung himself into an armchair, and wept.

Next day he began, with strenuous yet concealed ardor, to act on the revelations made him by Adair. For days and days he schooled himself to shun in his talk the least personality; for days and days he struggled to diffuse amiability among all associates. And yet failure, complete failure, at length stared him in the face. If the change was perceived it was also estimated as factitious. Philip found himself like a man trying to walk with a lame leg and hide its lameness by a succession of pathetic little struts.

Obviously his self-rehabilitation had come too late. One day he said this to Adair.

His friend—still the only friend he had at Oxford—nodded gravely. "But you can live it down, Philip, if you persevere," he said, with his abundant and captivating cheeriness. "A year more of stout endeavor, and you'll win them all over."

"A year?"

"Well, say less."

"Oh, say no time at all!" Philip laughed; and a great bitterness, a most dismal melancholy, followed his sentence. "I'd best go away. I'll chuck my degree; I'll chuck everything! It's all too absurd, too trivial! I'm not in a college—I'm in a conspiracy! Dear old Malcolm! you're the only gentleman in Magdalen. You may tell them, if you please, that I said so."

"I won't—I won't," called out the ever-cordial Adair, as Philip walked away from him through a little avenue of hawthorns. At this precise moment Philip had no fixed idea of quitting Oxford forever. But he ultimately did so, and the real reason was a telegram from his uncle's physicians in Norfolkshire, telling him of how Sir Stuart had suddenly grown so ill that death might soon result.

The next evening Philip stood at his uncle's bedside. Sir Stuart lay in a comatose state for several hours after his nephew's arrival. All night Philip, who occupied a near chamber, was visited, between sleeping and waking, by memories of the old man's earlier life. Even when Philip knew it as active and worldly, that life had already begun to decline. A skilled diplomat, a talented statesman, Sir Stuart had been stricken while comparatively young. He had never liked his little nephew, had often chided him severely, and once or twice had been on the verge of giving him bodily chastisement, though each time he had refrained from such an act, loathing its real commission.

A short time after dawn he waked to consciousness, and while the doctors found his physical force very low, the

attendants declared that his mind had not for months been clearer. When Philip, hastily roused from the doze into which he at last had fallen, appeared at his kinsman's bedside, Sir Stuart promptly recognized him. Soon he gave a sign, slight but unmistakable, that he wished to be left alone with Philip. When this was obeyed he looked long and hard at his nephew with eyes that burned strangely below great, white bushes of eyebrows.

"You're just the same."

"So you find me unchanged, sir?" ventured Philip.

"Yes; but older. How did you get so much older in so short a time?"

"It's not so short a time, sir, since—" And then the young man stopped short. Would the doctors like surprising or agitating revelations? Lamely Philip finished: "—since I was last here at Olyphant Park."

Sir Stuart glanced at one of his own wasted hands, lying, all vein and sinew, on the coverlid. "Well, well," he said, wearily, "we won't speak of yesterdays. It tires me to think of them. There are times when I seem to have been asleep for hundreds of them."

"You have been asleep for nearly seven years of them," thought his listener.

"And now, Philip," his uncle continued, in that thin, dreamy voice which made all he said seem like the speech of a ghost, "I surely can't have many more to-morrows. Perhaps I haven't even one. But if so, all the more reason that I should tell you quickly what it's better you should know. I ought to have told you before, but then—but then—"

"You were ill, Uncle Stuart." Pierced now by curiosity, Philip dropped into a chair close at the bedside. "Of course that prevented. I perfectly understand."

"Yes, ill—ill," the old man faltered, and for a moment there seemed signs of his again losing consciousness. But presently he pursued, in the same weak voice, yet with undiminished show of lucid-mindedness: "You will

find down in the library—I think on one of the top shelves—a history of our family, written long ago by some Olyphant with a literary turn, and beginning its chronicles from the middle part of the fifteenth century. There you will find the life—rather sketched than fully narrated—of a certain Geoffrey Olyphant who lived in this very house before its partial destruction by fire eighty or ninety years ago. His time, unless I err, was the latter part of the sixteenth century, and his character was so vicious and horrible that he was often believed to be possessed by a demon. He fell, finally, in a duel, after having roused the detestation of hundreds, having been forbidden to appear at Court, and having narrowly escaped assassination several times at the hands of both men and women whom his depravities and cruelties had wronged. His portrait is not in the great gallery of the west wing. It stands, protected by heavy cloths, in a large chamber at the end of the main grand staircase, on the second floor—a chamber few would notice in passing, though Geoffrey Olyphant is stated to have slept there for long periods. . . . And now, Philip, I must prepare you for what you will see in that portrait after you have removed the wrappings. You will see almost, if not quite, *the reproduction of your own face!*"

"My own face!" dropped from Philip, dumfoundedly. "Have you seen this portrait?"

But Sir Stuart was following the train of his own thoughts. "Through subsequent years this type has repeatedly appeared in our family. By a sort of malignant atavism it has recurred and recurred. Here and there in the record you may light on allusions to certain wicked and profligate Olyphants, though these are mentioned only in brief paragraphs."

Sir Stuart's voice sank, and he closed his eyes. A sharp little exclamation from Philip made him unclose them. "These wicked and profligate Olyphants, as you put it, uncle, did they

look like *him*? Did they look—like—*me*?"

"Yes; the same type; the same mouth, narrowing toward the edges, yet full at the front. Eyes like yours, bright and black—all the 'real' Olyphants, you know, have frank blue eyes—with that peculiar droop of the upper lid and that queer little curve of the nose at its tip. Atavism—atavism, Philip! I've known two or three of ye in my own generation. You'll get the baronetcy and the entailed lands when I'm gone. They didn't; but they were sad rogues; they stained our ancient name almost as black as old Geoffrey stained it. It's the curse on us—there's some absurd legend about a peasant woman who cast it, ages ago, because of a betrayed daughter. Yet all that is merest fable. Now, Philip—but I feel sleepy again. . . . Still, remember, I say to you beware! beware! . . ."

The words died as if on the lips of the dying. But though Sir Stuart never rallied again, never again unclosed his eyes, and died peacefully a few hours later, his "beware!" rang in Philip's ears for many hours afterward.

When the funeral was over, and he found himself alone with a troop of respectful servants in the immense old house, Philip spent several days of almost hideous despondency. He conceded the scientific facts of atavism—of ancestral physical and mental traits, breaking forth from time to time in deciduous generations. There was no contesting this truth; it had again and again been proved. Dreading to look on the volume that his uncle had indicated, he nevertheless made search for it and secured it. The short yet repellent biography of Geoffrey Olyphant so sickeningly thrilled him that he resolved, for a time at least, not to look on the concealed and enswathed portrait of this dead-and-gone scoundrel.

His first practical movement was a letter to the regnant powers at Magdalen College, resigning all further connection with it as an undergraduate member. Then, even while tak-

ing long walks through the great park, now his own property, alive with leafy and flowery messages of late Spring, he gradually made up his mind that there was only one way out of it, and that way death. Of course he might go into the great world and be received there with the homage always bestowed on lavish wealth combined with high station. People might detest him, but they would truckle to him, nevertheless. And all the while this devil in his blood would stay dominant; for interims of a few weeks, perhaps, it would repress its power, and then again, for long terms, it would probably reassert a fresh, baneful sway. One might sneer, in this advanced century, at the spells of sorcerers; what answer save assent could one give to that poisonous necromancy which is named atavism and heredity?

"I am their victim, their martyr," mused Philip. "Talk about the human will as one may choose, what influence can combat, with any hope of triumph, an insane saturnine obsession like this of mine? Absurd even to dream of a radical change! What is my future? A tendency to do and say hateful things among my fellow-mortals—a tendency uncontrollable at certain times, moderately controllable at others. Men dislike me. Women? I've sown a few wild oats, and met a few women who professed that they cared for me; but I never cared for any of them—that's doubtless part of the hereditary curse—and I've always felt that they merely cared, on their part, for the grandee I should sometime become. No; suicide, vulgar and sensational as it sounds, is now my sole sensible course."

But one morning, while his thoughts were speeding along this dreary course, a letter was handed him from his relative, Malcolm Adair, at Oxford. It ran thus:

How foolish for you to resign! I am coming down soon for a glimpse of my mother at Strawleigh, and shall, of course, run over to the Park. Mother

says that she saw you and had a word with you at the funeral. She wants to drop in on you, and will probably do so before I arrive.

Somehow this missive gave Philip a new thrill of comfort. After all, he was fond of Malcolm. There was no denying that this man, his cousin three or four times removed, had been thus far his only supporter and adherent. He had believed in him, striven to help him against himself. And now Philip, full of a yearning to see Adair once more, postponed, as might be said, the terrible step that had so lately seemed his best and wisest course.

Strawleigh was an ancient red brick house in the Tudor style, not more than three miles distant. Its present mistress was the Countess of Cloverley, Malcolm's mother. After the death of Malcolm's father it had been willed her, and as Mrs. Adair she had lived much in it during her son's childhood. But afterward she had married, while still a beautiful woman, the Earl of Cloverley, and had then spent several distressful years at her new husband's home in Leicestershire. These years were distressful, because Lord Cloverley, soon after the birth of her daughter, Muriel, had broken his spine on the hunting-field. He had been the first cousin of her husband and head of the Adair family, so that her son, Malcolm, and her daughter, Lady Muriel, were more than step-brother and step-sister—almost as near, in fact, as if the same father and mother had begotten them. But Lady Cloverley never loved her second husband as she had loved her first; and though she nursed the Earl for many months through a trying illness, her second widowhood brought deep relief. She then returned to her former home of Strawleigh, and lived there during the youth of her two oddly related children.

"I remember that she spoke to me at the funeral," Philip now reflected. "But so many people spoke that I had almost forgotten her. Surely

she recalls me in the past only as a bad boy, guarded by vigilant tutors. And surely she recalls, also, that I would always curl my lip at her children in the most churlish way, whatever Malcolm may have told her of my later liking for him when we met at Oxford. I must see her if she comes; I must surely see her. I have refused to see so many, but Malcolm's mother I cannot refuse."

She came the next afternoon. She had hardly begun to touch with her spoon the tea that was offered her, when Philip felt the whole big, dimish, wainscoted room fairly blooming with her presence. She was faded, if you please, but she was sympathetic, none the less, like a time-touched crayon sketch, or like a rich piece of dulled tapestry. She had once been very fair; one could see this at a glance. Her teeth were still perfect, her smile had a moonlight softness, her figure still retained some of its best curves, and her graces of movement were but slightly impaired.

She spoke with great fondness of her son, and touched on the dead Sir Stuart with a delicate seeming forgetfulness of his long prostration, throwing the rosiest descriptive rays over his past political and social life.

"And now, Philip," she at length said, with a slight remonstrant lifting of one finger, "I must tell you that Malcolm has written me concerning the resignation of your Oxford membership. Malcolm is very grieved; so am I. But I see that I am annoying you." And here Lady Cloverley paused.

Philip felt that he had frowned. Then something unexplainable in his visitor's luring face touched him to the soul. The mood of haughty irritability that had gripped his nerves fell away as if its clutch had turned to shadow. He looked steadily for a moment into the silver-gray eyes of Malcolm's mother.

"You must know a great deal of the Olyphant family," he said.

"Yes—why not? My two husbands were both Adairs, and from time to time, during the past two

hundred years—perhaps even further back—the Adairs and Olyphants have intermarried."

"I wonder if you have known in relatively recent years two Olyphants, both men, whom I could name." And then Philip did name them, closely watching the effect.

"I never met them, but I have heard of them," Lady Cloverley replied, vague-voiced and with a slight shiver.

"Have you ever heard," resumed Philip, "of a certain peculiarity in our race—?" But here he broke off short, soon beginning again, and recounting in every detail that last death-bed monologue of his uncle's.

The Countess was pale and somewhat tremulous when he finished. She rose, however, took a seat quite close to him and laid a hand upon his own.

"Philip! Philip! I will be very candid with you. Yes, this 'atavism,' as you term it, *has* been mentioned to me. Malcolm's father once made it known. But that is long ago, and I had half-forgotten it. Still, you must not let it trouble you, as I see it is doing. You must fight the whole thing down. Perhaps three parts of it are merely myth. *I will help you!* Malcolm will help you!"

"Malcolm *has* helped me, God bless him!" Philip said.

"And Muriel, too. *She* will help you."

"Muriel? Ah, I remember—your daughter, Lady Muriel."

"Not *Lady* Muriel to *you*. Remember, you played together as boy and girl."

"Played!" And the old sarcasm would have its way in Philip's face and voice. "I treated both her and Malcolm like the bad-tempered little wretch I was."

Lady Cloverley laughed this off. "Oh, you'd have to treat her nicely now. She is just eighteen, and will be home from a visit to-morrow to welcome Malcolm. She's a tall lily of a girl, with great stars of eyes and a rose mouth. She's like none of her kindred on either side. And oh, that

reminds me! How strange — how strange!"

"What is strange?" asked Philip.

"Speaking of atavism, there is something in the Adairs like that curious feature on which your uncle dwelt as belonging to the Olyphant generations. Like, and yet so different! Every now and then a woman will be born of some Adair who is extremely handsome—as, for instance, my dear Muriel—and yet without the vaguest resemblance to any of her surviving relations. She always has had big, lovely eyes and the sweetest of faces, and she has always been very good and charming. This is the way with Muriel. Her type has suddenly cropped out among the Adairs for the first time during many years. In our drawing-room at Strawleigh there is a portrait painted by some Italian during the reign of Charles I. It is Muriel in replica. And this lady married into the Olyphant family, by the way, as some faded old letters on the frame record. But again this reminds me — *your* portrait, on which Sir Stuart discoursed in so eerie a fashion; you've seen it by this time, of course."

"No," said Philip.

"No? Ah, but you *will*."

"Some day—perhaps."

"It is still closeted there?"

"It's in the room he indicated."

There was silence. "Philip," at last said Lady Cloverley, with great tenderness, "I understand so well."

"So well?" he repeated, turning to the winsome face beside him.

The Countess touched his cheek with her lips. "It's horrible for you —horrible! Do you know what my dear Malcolm has often written me of you? I'm sure you're fond of Malcolm, so you will let me say it."

Philip turned to her, and their hands met in a warm clasp. Somehow he had heard Malcolm's tones in her voice more than once, and had seen flashes of resemblance to him in her features.

"You may say anything, dear lady," he replied. "What is it that

Malcolm wrote you about my poor benighted and bewildered self?"

Lady Cloverley's clasp of his hand tightened. "That you had in you, Philip, the making of a splendid man. That you had suffered disastrously from early neglect of training, through your uncle's long illness. That though you were unpopular at Oxford he was certain you would ultimately outlive, while there, the results of superficial follies and indiscretions."

"Did he say that? So like Malcolm! But he was wrong—fatally wrong."

"I don't believe it!" cried Lady Cloverley. "I was wrong, however."

"You?"

"In not having seen more of you—in not having made my children see more of you. And yet circumstance was, in a way, despotic. Through much of your childhood I was down in Devon; then, after I returned here to Strawleigh, you had gone to the Continent, traveling immensely there with tutors; and afterward—well, afterward I found that you had trotted off to Oxford! So, when all is said, I'm not so very unpardonable."

"It's only your fancy that you are not perfectly pardonable," Philip replied. The spell of her fascination was over him. A sentence of Malcolm's floated through his brain: "My mother had hosts of suitors in her youth, and no wonder, for she must have been then, as she is now—though, of course, with a difference—the most bewitching of women."

"Ah, you're in a pardoning mood," blithely exclaimed the Countess. Here she abruptly rose. "Come, then, Philip; we'll go up stairs and see the picture together."

While he rose also Philip yet recoiled. "I had determined . . ."

"Not to see it yet? Of course—I understand—you were putting it off. But with me at your side it will not be the same. I'll mitigate the shock. And why not have it over at once? Why postpone it? Or," broke off Lady Cloverley, "let me go up and

see it first. Then I'll tell you if I think it best *you* should see it at all—if I do or do not advise your having it destroyed."

Philip, with more wistful eagerness and sadness than he knew, looked into Lady Cloverley's upraised, pleading face. "Well," he said, after a long pause, and touched a bell.

To the servant who answered he gave certain low-voiced directions. Then he and Lady Cloverley reseated themselves side by side.

"Tell me about your Muriel," he softly urged. This request was quite enough for the maid's loving mother, who at once entered the realms of eulogium. Only the servant's reappearance interrupted her.

"Is all ready, Somers?" Philip asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I will go with you to the door of the chamber," Philip said to Lady Cloverley. "Afterward you can call me. I shall be in the hall, just below."

She put her hand on his arm. "And if I ask you to see it?"

"I will consent."

"And if I ask you to have it—destroyed?"

"I will consent."

After this they went up stairs together. As she entered the room, whose windows threw from their newly uncurtained panes bright splashes of sunset light beyond the threshold, Philip passed slowly down the staircase.

In the lower hall he waited. Grotesque thoughts were slipping through his mind. "I might now be lying dead somewhere," he mused, "driven to self-murder by overwhelming depression, if this lovable woman—like an emissary from her son, Malcolm himself—had not come as she did!" And then a new, brightening influence filled him. "That other atavism, as if it were the shining side of our own gloomy one! How marvelous! Could she have been benignantly deceiving me? Olyphant—Adair. Repeatedly the two races have married, through past years.

Oh, I am well aware of that! I recollect—"

"Philip, Philip! Come—please come."

He started painfully at the voice, and yet its tones were so gladsome that they soon quickened his pulses with a sense of cheer for which he could have found no conceivable name.

"Well, Lady Cloverley?"

They stood, facing each other, at the doorway of the chamber into which he had so lately seen her pass.

"Come in," she said; and he noted how her breast heaved, how her eyes sparkled.

They moved forward. It was a great apartment, with three broad windows, two of which the servant had opened. Through one poured the splendid, though dying light of an English Spring day. Every appurtenance hinted of extreme yet patrician antiquity. In the big, carved, high-posted bed one felt that Queen Elizabeth might have slept.

"See," said Lady Cloverley. She pointed to a picture full-flooded by affluent yellowish sunshine. The work itself was not superexcellent as art; some Fleming in the latter part of the seventeenth century might have achieved it; indeed, a certain Dutch-looking name was inscribed on the canvas. And below, on the dull gold border of the frame, were half-effaced letters, among which "Olyphant" and "Adair" were plainly visible.

"How beautiful!" soon broke from Philip.

"Is it not?" cried Lady Cloverley. "There she looks at us from the canvas—an exquisite symbol of all loveliness in womanhood! Mark the big, adorable dark eyes and the tender little rose mouth!"

Philip peered and peered. "Oh, she is *too* enchanting!" he exclaimed. "A man might die for such a woman—die a hundred deaths!"

Then he suddenly drew back. His eyes for an instant swept his companion's face as if he suspected some deception.

"But my uncle said—"

"Your uncle never *saw* the picture! This proves it. He had heard some family legend about Geoffrey Olyphant's portrait having been placed here, and—"

But Philip's eyes had meanwhile roved round the apartment. "Somers has made a mistake," he exclaimed, presently. "Look—there is another wrapped-up thing over yonder. Too evidently it's *his* picture—"

"Don't touch it!" Lady Cloverley broke in. "Let it rest there! Let it rot there! This is so eloquent an answer, Philip! Poor Somers's mistake was divine! Don't you understand?" she went on, excitedly, both hands clinging to his arm. "This means the two atavisms—this is the signal sent you from heaven! . . . Oh, what am I saying? But *don't* you realize?"

"Realize?" he echoed.

"Oh, yes—the answer—the message, as if from God Himself! She was hustled away somehow, by some mistake, this radiant creature, years ago. She must have been an Adair—"

"An Adair?"

"Why not?—why not?" Lady Cloverley hid her face in both hands for an instant, then she hurried to the picture and kissed it on the painted lips. "She's my *Muriel*!—she's my own *Muriel*, a little older, yet as like as if the girl herself had sat to some forgotten artist in forgotten years!"

Just then a voice sounded from below—a high, musical voice. "Mamma!" it called; "mamma, where are you? May I come up stairs if you are there with Sir Philip?"

Lady Cloverley hastened to the door. "It's *Muriel*," she said, "returned to Strawleigh sooner than I had expected. She heard I was here, and had herself driven over to the Park."

Philip stood like one wholly con-

founded. His eyes were riveted, however, on the portrait.

"Mamma!" again called the voice. Lady Cloverley closed the door. Rejoining Philip, she pointed to the portrait. With great intensity she now met the eyes that he turned to her.

"That picture has enthralled you."

"Yes," he granted.

"For such a woman, you said, a man could die a hundred deaths. For such a woman, in flesh and blood, I ask, could you live one life, nobly and finely?"

"Why not, why not?" murmured Philip, his eyes wandering again to the portrait.

Lady Cloverley burst into sudden tears. "It may be nothing with me—it may be only a dream, a fancy. But when you see my *Muriel* you will see the living incarnation of that picture! And why should not these two atavisms meet and destroy each other—meet and destroy each other *for good*, I mean—in a love that would be happiness for her, happiness and redemption, both combined, for you?"

Philip had caught the vehemence, the rapture, the exaltation of her mood. He took both her hands and pressed them, while they searched each other's faces.

"The two atavisms," he whispered. "Yes, I see; it's all quite clear."

Lady Cloverley went to the door and opened it.

"Is that you, *Muriel*?" she called.

"Yes, mamma."

"Come up and see the picture of a very handsome lady, my dear, who strongly resembles *you*! At least, I think so, but on this point we are going to have the opinion of Sir Philip."

After that Lady Cloverley went back to Philip's side. Once again they looked at each other with great fixity. An outer sound of footsteps grew nearer, nearer. They both stood waiting, flushed and expectant.



UPS AND DOWNS OF THE BROWNS

BROWN has a cozy office
On the twenty-second floor
Of a modern office building,
With conveniences galore.
Electric lights and mail chutes
And everything first-rate—
And an elevator starter
Who is strictly up to date.

Now Mrs. Brown came in one day,
A smile upon her face;
Took elevator No. 6,
And launched forth into space.
'Tis safe to say she'd hardly gone
Beyond the second floor,
When Mr. Brown came sailing down
Serene in No. 4.

"Hey, Mr. Brown!" the starter cried,
"Your wife went up this minute."
A car was just about to start,
And Mr. Brown jumped in it.
"You'd better wait till she comes back!"
The starter tried to shout,
But up went Brown—a car came down,
And Mrs. Brown stepped out!

The starter shook with hidden mirth
He didn't dare display;
"Your husband, mum, went back," he said,
"But crossed you on the way.
Just take a chair and rest a while,
He'll surely come right down."
She wouldn't listen; up she went—
While down came Mr. Brown.

He went back up—his wife came down,
And headed for the door,
While Brown ransacked in wild despair
The twenty-second floor.
As out into the street she passed,
With proud, uplifted chin,
"I hope they'll meet in heaven," said
The starter, with a grin.

O. N. BURKE.

LOOSE change is like a boy baby—it never comes amiss.

BO-PEEP

HER sheep are lost—the hearts held valueless.
 From out some dismal, shadow-haunted place
 A giant comes, whose name is Loneliness,
 And threatens her with grim and spectral face.

About the fields she seeks with carven crook—
 A silken parasol with fluted rim:
 Her hat droops low to hide a frightened look,
 Three roses burning crimson on its brim.

The music of the twilight yodel-call
 Is vain; no faint and far-off echo stirs.
 Her sheep are lost, or strayed, or stolen all,
 And gathered into other folds than hers.

Back o'er long meadows cold with clammy dews;
 No cheery bell-note through the blackness rings;
 Wet grasses wind about her buckled shoes,
 And moths of memory blind her with their wings.

The crooked game of hide-and-seek is o'er;
 The soft eyes see it through a misty blur.
 Lo, yonder there, beside her very door,
 One faithful sheep, returned for love of her!

HATTIE WHITNEY.



POLITICS IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

BARELY a week had elapsed since the creation of Eve. She and Adam were having lunch served under the palms in the Garden of Eden. After the third mint julep Adam began to talk politics. Eve's face brightened—her long desired opportunity had come at last.

"Dearest," she cooed, deftly removing a few stray crumbs from her fig-leaf shirt waist, "won't you promise to vote for woman's suffrage at the next election? I should so much love to have a hand in the Garden politics."

A hard, cruel look crossed Adam's handsome countenance. Hitching up his grapevine suspenders and shrugging his shoulders, he replied:

"Now, Evie dear—" here he planted a kiss on her upturned lips—"you must be a good little wifie. I know you've been here nearly a week, sweetness, but you must remember that, after all, you're only a *side issue*."

Calling his caddy ape, he strolled off to the golf links, while Eve bit her lip and muttered something about "goin' to raise Cain if she couldn't have her own way."

MR. THORNLEY'S EXIT

By Herbert Carroll

IT was the best bedroom of the best hotel in Bellevue-on-Hudson. The huge four-poster, with its high-heaving oblong of white, filled almost half the room. Three windows, the sashes thrown up, let in the moonlit June midnight, the perfumes of garden and wood and the wailings and chirpings of their myriad little Summer tenants.

From the mantel a tall oil lamp with a crimson paper shade shed its light full on the lounge, where lay a man in evening dress. His beardless face suggested thirty years. The gray in his black hair at the temples suggested forty years. The truth was midway between. His sensuous mouth said that man is an animal. His clear, cynical, gray-green eyes insisted that he is an intellectual animal.

There were wide blue-black circles under his eyes, and over his whole face was the pallor of imminent death. His right hand held a blood-soaked handkerchief against his chest, above the heart to the right. His shirt bosom was limp and wet and stained a dark red. At the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and a rather harsh voice, saying "Never mind; I wish to be alone with him," the man's eyes turned toward the door. It opened presently to disclose a middle-aged doctor with black medicine bag. There was no mistaking the meaning of that odor of drugs, the cut of the grizzled beard, the "sickroom" air and manner.

"So, my man—" he began, as he advanced. But at sight of the figure sprawling on the lounge he stopped and stood with lips apart. His amazed

eyes noted every detail—the fashionable evening dress, the many evidences of refinement and position.

"I beg your pardon," he found voice to stammer at last. "It is astounding—I expected to find—it is an incredible coincidence for our little town."

The two men looked steadily each at the other, each evidently studying the other. The doctor broke the silence.

"You have been shot?"

"In the left lung, I think." The wounded man's voice was most agreeable—deep, clear and tranquil. "The wound is mortal. I sent for you chiefly because you are the coroner. You are Dr. Bronson, the coroner, are you not?"

"I am," said the doctor. "But at least let me look at your wound and dress it. Your voice and manner do not suggest danger of immediate death."

"Danger!" smiled the man, as the doctor busied himself with the wound. "Hope, rather. The pain is most—most annoying. But, unlike the other pains of one kind and another that I have had, it has a real consolation. It will be the last—the very last."

The doctor was looking at the bullet hole, small and round, the centre of a red-black disk.

"How long ago?" he asked.

"About an hour—a little less. It was at midnight, just after the clock struck."

Dr. Bronson looked again at the wound, then glanced curiously, doubtfully, at his patient. When he had finished his work he gave him a large

drink of brandy from the bottle on the table, and sat looking thoughtfully at him.

"I forgot to ask your name."

"Thornley—Wyndham Thornley."

"The New York lawyer?"

"I am a lawyer in New York." Thornley's tone showed a certain strain.

"Wyndham Thornley," repeated the doctor, half under his breath. "What a pity! what a disgrace! The wages of sin is—"

"And now," said Thornley, "may I trouble you to take my statement?"

"You have read the Ten Commandments?" Dr. Bronson was speaking abstractedly.

Thornley looked amusedly at him. "You did not tell me that you were also a priest," he said.

"In those Ten Commandments," the doctor went on, his eyes looking sadly into Thornley's, "only one injunction occurs more than once."

"I never heard that," said Thornley, interested. "Which is it?"

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," and again, "Thou shalt not commit"—you know it, the Seventh."

"Bless my soul!" said Thornley, smiling languidly, and slowly closing and opening his eyes. "That is most interesting. But—I shall trouble you only in your function as coroner."

"Be patient." The doctor was speaking very gently. "I have read a great deal about you. Like many obscure men, I have been watching your rise, basing hopes for the future on the talents God gave you for the service of your country. And it seems horrible to me, horrible and pitiful, to find you here, dying in disgrace, leaving disgrace and misery behind you."

Thornley was looking at him in bewilderment.

"What is this? Are you mad?" he exclaimed.

"And though you are dying," continued the doctor, "my anger rises against you as I think of my friend. Oh, I knew that she did not love him. But I knew—I thought—that she was a good woman, a faithful—"

"Stop!" Thornley's manner and voice were perfectly calm. "Is it your habit to give these exhibitions of eccentricity to the poor creatures who happen to send for you?"

Dr. Bronson looked angrily at the amused, cynical face, and said:

"Where did you get your wound?"

"That is better. We seem to be recovering our normal senses. I was shot under those big elms on the north side of the main street—Wayne street—in the block beyond the electric power station."

"But that is a good three miles from Egerton Hall!" protested the doctor.

"Egerton Hall?" Thornley asked. "That used to be called the Marion place, didn't it?"

"It was the Marion homestead until ten years ago," replied the doctor. "It belongs to John Larkin now. He bought it in when old Mr. Marion became bankrupt and died. And he married the granddaughter, as you know."

"I think I did hear something of it. But Larkin must be a newcomer. You see, we went away abroad when I was nineteen. I had not seen the town for sixteen years, until three days ago. But let us go on."

The doctor looked meaningly at him and said:

"I had a call to Egerton this evening. Mrs. Larkin was dying—"

Thornley's eyes closed, and the doctor saw that he had fainted. He brought him back to consciousness, and was looking at him with the triumph of one who has found out something by a clever ruse, when Thornley's eyelids slowly lifted. The expression in his eyes made the doctor relent, in spite of himself.

"You were saying?" murmured Thornley, weakly.

"They *said* that Mrs. Larkin was dying. When I got there I found everything in confusion. Larkin went away last Monday, to be gone a week. His wife was alone with the servants. He came back unexpectedly at half-past nine this evening. On his way up the stairs a man rushed at him.

He drew his revolver and fired. The man knocked him down and dashed on out. They found Mrs. Larkin not far from the head of the stairs in a swoon. It was not serious."

"And so, when you saw me," said Thornley, "you at first thought that I was the burglar, and then that Mrs. Larkin had been entertaining in her husband's absence. You are a charitable and generous friend, my dear doctor. Mrs. Larkin is to be congratulated."

"I was with her when she came back to consciousness. She said——"

The doctor paused, noted with disappointment that Thornley's expression of languid interest did not change, then continued:

"She said, 'Edward!' and caught hold of my hand. Then she sank back, covered her eyes with her arm, shuddered and refused to speak again."

Dr. Bronson stopped and looked at Thornley impressively. "I know now that she meant you, Edward Wyndham Thornley."

"True, Edward is part of my name. But it has been so long since I've heard it that I had almost forgotten. Go on."

"It is idle for you to deny——"

"Not so fast, my dear doctor. At least, hear me before you close the incident. It is distressing to disappoint you of this lady's reputation, which you seem bent on destroying. But I really must speak. I thought I would go up this evening and see my old home, The Oaks, by moonlight. I went; I spent the evening there, and toward midnight I strolled back to the village to take up the work I came here to do in peace and quiet. I trust you are bearing in mind that The Oaks is two miles to the north-east of Bellevue, while Egerton is three miles to the south. At those elms near the power house a man was leaning against the fence in the deep shadow. He may have been your burglar, resting after his run from Egerton. He faced me, thrust a revolver at me and demanded my money or my life. I knocked him

down. He fired as he fell, then rose and ran away. I fell to the ground, and after a while crawled and staggered on here."

"Yes—of course—there was plenty of time." The doctor was talking to himself.

"What now?" smiled Thornley.

"Your wound is not one hour, but several hours old—" the doctor began.

"Good God!" exclaimed Thornley, with amused disgust, "was ever dying man so beset? Why are you determined to confirm your ungenerous and unjust suspicions?"

"My duty, sir. My duty as an officer of the law, my duty as a man of principle, my duty to my friend."

"No doubt you are a worthy man. But why so resolute to make a duty of what an Apache would shrink from performing? I wish that my last glimpse of human nature had been less repulsive."

"You can insult me, sir, but you cannot drive me from my duty."

"Duty again! You are as full of duty as a spider is of poison. And insult! Why, my dear sir, a gentleman cannot be insulted. An attempt to insult him can be made, but it is like trying to bedaub the sky with mud. No—" Thornley was talking slowly and evenly, yet intensely—"I cannot permit you to do what you are pleased to disguise as your duty."

The doctor was sitting with red face and downcast eyes.

"Now, first, answer me this: Are you willing to swear that my wound is several hours old?"

Dr. Bronson was silent.

"No? What says duty? Why, that you dare not swear it. You know that the experts would laugh at you. Now answer me again: How far is Egerton Hall from those elms where I was shot?"

"Three miles at least."

"Good. Now if you will go to those elms you will find a great pool of my blood. The whole village will be talking of it to-morrow."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the doctor. "The blood is not there. You

could not have got there from Eger-ton. It is a physical impossibility."

"But you know that the blood is there. See how your mask of duty drops! See how chagrined you are as this woman's reputation escapes you!"

Embarrassment and shame deepened in the doctor's face as the man on the lounge talked in that voice of quiet and cynical raillery. There was silence for full a minute. Then Dr. Bronson looked straight at Thornley and said:

"I beg your pardon. There shall not be a doubt raised. I was in the wrong."

"I notice, with some hope," smiled Thornley, good-humoredly, "that you say nothing more about duty."

"Let me take the statement."

Thornley dictated and the doctor wrote:

"I, Wyndham Thornley, having been duly sworn and cautioned, and knowing that I am about to die, do de-pose as follows: I was walking down Wayne street, in the town of Bellevue-on-Hudson, and just at midnight had reached the elms in the block to

the east of the electric power station. A man, tall, thin, his coat collar turned up and his slouch hat drawn down over his eyes, stepped from the shadow and said: 'I want your money!' I knocked him down. He fired as I did so, and as I fell, he rose and ran away. The bullet from his revolver penetrated my chest."

"That is enough," said Dr. Bronson, "unless you can describe your assailant more fully."

"I cannot," replied Thornley. "It was very dark in that deep shadow."

Dr. Bronson called the night por-ter, and they lifted the wounded man while he signed "Wyndham Thorn-ley" in a flowing hand. They laid him down again. The porter signed as witness and went away. Dr. Bron-son filled in the blanks at the bottom of the page.

"There," he said, finally. "It is all over."

He looked toward the lounge, then rose and stood over Thornley and touched him. Then in a different tone he repeated:

"It is all over."



AN OLD-WORLD RUIN

HERE in the stillness and the risen night
Tread softly, for the dead are all around;
These aged corridors no more resound
With glad thanksgiving or with revel light.
Here kings have walked triumphant in men's sight;
Here poets have been acclaimed and laurel-crowned;
And here have stood, accused and fetter-bound,
Zealot and priest, and sage and eremite.

Here in forgotten nights of May the moan
Of lovers' lutes awoke the echoing stone,
Or voices hushed in fear spoke solemnly;
And oft behind those moulded prison bars,
Weary and sad from her captivity,
Some queen has breathed her longing to the stars.

R. LLEWELLYN.

LOVE'S TREMBLING-CUP

By Ella Higginson

UNTO a woman Love one day
Came jauntily and said:
"Thou art of haughty mien, but I
Can lower thy proud head."

But smiled the woman scornfully.
"I challenge; do thy worst!
I'll drink thy bitterest dreg, and cry
'I drank thy nectar first!'"

Then to her lips Love held a cup,
And joy more keen than pain
Leaped up her pulses to her heart;
She drank—and drank again.

"Drink deep," Love said, half-pityingly;
"Poor foolish one, drink deep;
Then to thy couch—a night comes on
When thou wilt pray for sleep."

For one year and a day she knew
The rapture of the blest—
Such ecstasy as Mary thrilled
When Christ slept on her breast.

Then came Love to her jauntily,
And looked into her eyes;
"I have another cup for thee;
The hour has come—arise!"

But smiled the woman scornfully.
"It is the cup of pain;
I drank thy nectar first—and now—"
She proudly drank again.

"I like thy spirit well," Love said;
"Come, keep thy courage up."
He held before her dauntless eyes
Still yet another cup,

And lightly dropped the broken pearl
 Of broken faith; it sank
 And melted in the amber dregs.
 With pallid lips she drank.

The look of Death grew in her eyes,
 She did not shrink or speak,
 But up the gray of ashes came
 And covered brow and cheek.

“Now drink,” quoth Love, “my bitterest cup,
 The cup of jealousy;
 But first look in its ruby depths,
 And speak. What dost thou see?”

*She saw another woman's arms
 About his throat; and there
 Those sweeter, younger, lingering lips
 Pressed kisses on his hair.*

The cup shook on her teeth; she drank,
 And bowed her head, and cried:
 “*Love, ere I drank thy nectar first,
 Would God that I had died!*”



AS IT WAS, IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE

NOW there be many kinds of widowers, grass, golf, ocean and others, besides the genuine sort left to the kindly care of Time.

This Widower was of the last-named variety, and the father of a beautiful boy of five. In the early Summer months, when Nature smiles alluringly and beckons the ever-weary toiler countryward, the Widower, his Mother, who kept house for him, and his little Boy left the bustle and heat of the city and sought a retreat among the green hills along the majestic Hudson.

Now there were three maidens who became especially interested in this fascinating Trio:

Helen, practical and housewifely, who sought advice and guidance of the Grandmother.

Mary, motherly and gentle, who won her way to the heart of the small Boy through the usual channel with cakes and stick-candy.

Kitty, gay and flirtatious, whose boast was her ignorance of domestic economy and all the housewifely arts, who toyed with the heart of the small Boy's Father as if it were the plaything of an hour.

Now it came to pass that one day the Widower went to his Mother and said:

“I have come to the conclusion, Mother mine, that all these cares are too much for you, and have therefore decided it is my duty to give you a daughter and my Boy a mother.”

“Of course it is Helen,” was the reply; then calling to the small Boy playing about the room, she said, “Darling, whom do you love best after Papa and Grannie?” and the youngster shouted, “Miss Mary!”

And straightway the Widower hied him to Kitty and proposed.

MARGARET RAPELJE SUYDAM.

SIR LEICESTER'S BLIND POOL

By Henry Irving Dodge

LYDIA VILLA, widow, handsome and thirty, lived at Pinehurst on a splendid property that was mortgaged from the centre of the earth to the top of the sky. And that mortgage was only a first; after it came a second, on what, goodness only knows, unless it was the property of the Chinese gentleman who lived immediately underneath—but that was his affair. The second mortgage trick was done by a real estate sharp and the attorney for some estate, after a fashion peculiar to gentlemen of their craft, and for it the widow had paid an enormous commission. Reginald Orglethorp, her cousin once removed, had undertaken to straighten matters out for Lydia, but had succeeded only in involving her affairs in a more hopeless tangle than before.

Things were at this pass when Sir Leicester Bunsby came on the scene with a scheme for a blind pool. Sir Leicester was a tall, well-bred man, wore eyeglasses and side whiskers, as all tall, well-bred Englishmen should, and played good billiards. He had a high, arched nose and was much of a pretender, but the best of fellows with those who understood him. While well educated and a thorough man of the world, he was cursed with a weak and paradoxical credulity—the kind of credulity one meets at the race track or among Wall street men who have been victimized a thousand times, yet are willing to be victimized a thousand times more. It was through billiards Sir Leicester met Orglethorp, and through Orglethorp he met the widow.

Spring had arrived, and Lydia was

celebrating the last "flicker" of her dying social reign with a small house party, of which the Baronet was one. John Barclay was also there. Barclay was a typical New York gentleman—a man of family, educated, traveled, rich, fashionable, generous, shrewd, forty and absolutely imperturbable. He was rather a grave, meditative man; his eyes were large, brown and somewhat melancholy, and he had a most attractive smile.

In a little alcove room opening on the veranda Orglethorp and Lydia were seated.

"Oh, dear!" said the fair chatelaine, after a pause; "dear old Barclay has been at me again about my extravagances; he says I cannot last a week at this rate—only a pittance left. Positively, Reginald, I'm not permitted to handle a bit of cash. I don't know what money looks like; do you?"

"Yes, I know what it looks like."

"You naughty fellow!" laughed the widow; "you said you had a bad memory."

"That only applies to debts," said the young man, very quietly. "My memory is generally faithful to my friends; and my best friends have always been those vulgarians usually referred to as 'dollars.' They make other friends for you, don't you know."

"And they sometimes turn friends away," said the widow.

"History may record such a case, but history was always my weak point," replied Reginald.

"What's the controversy?" asked Sir Leicester, amiably, approaching and wiping his gold eyeglasses with

a silk handkerchief. "It can't be that any two Americans disagree about dollars?"

"Not as to their purchasing power, Sir Leicester," rejoined Mrs. Villa, smiling sweetly at the Baronet.

"Can it be you refer to titles?" he laughed. "If so, I must remind you that they are by no means a test of the power of money. In fact, I cannot imagine anything easier to purchase, especially by your beautiful Americans."

"Yes," sighed Lydia; "I fear it is only too easy to purchase titles, but what an unhappy investment they often prove!"

"Dear, dear!" smiled the Baronet. "You would say, then, that those who wear titles are necessarily not gentlemen?"

"No, I mean that those who wear them are not necessarily gentlemen," laughed the widow. "The significance is merely in the location of the 'not.'"

"Same as when a man is hanged," murmured Sir Leicester. "But ah—" standing with feet apart and swinging his eyeglasses—"referring again to money, did it ever occur to you that dollars have a real, tangible, though supernatural power?"

"Why, what can you mean, Sir Leicester?" asked the widow.

"I mean that the dollars of the wicked, after ruining their possessor, will dwindle away irresistibly and leave his children destitute; while money righteously acquired will increase and multiply and be a blessing to all the descendants of the house."

"What a happy man you are to have had such a father, Sir Leicester!" remarked the widow, graciously.

"Ah, yes," replied the Baronet. "It may not be modest to boast of one's father, but I am certainly to be congratulated."

"And you find his virtue reflected in your prosperity, Sir Leicester?" suggested Reginald.

"Again, yes; far beyond my humble deserts. My business capacity is only ordinary, yet I find whatever I go into prospers. I have demon-

strated the rule again and again. I cannot account for it. I have even put it to the test by engaging in the most absurd and hazardous ventures, yet they all turn out well."

"You must be a regular Monte Cristo," said Lydia. "I suppose you go into schemes all the time."

"Yes; but only for amusement. For instance, I have recently been urged to form what is known as a blind pool, in Wall street."

"A blind pool?" repeated Lydia and Reginald.

"Yes; it's a pool where people usually go in blind and come out seeing."

"But in your case?"

"Well, you see, in my case it's different. When I go in I form the pool myself. I don't trust to others, nor to luck such as I have described. I wait until I secure some infallible information, and then, with my usual luck to help me, I go in."

"And win?"

"I have never yet failed"—feeling the nibble of the fish, and angling for both.

Lydia saw before her a chance to recoup her lost fortune.

"And shall you form this—what do you call it?—'blind pool?'" she asked.

"That depends," replied Sir Leicester, playing with his fish. "I expect important news from Washington as to the action of Congress in the Pacific Union matter. In fact, I am looking for a telegram this very evening; ah! this may be it now." The Baronet took the message the servant handed him, tore the end from the envelope and ran his eyes over the contents. "Ah, yes," he resumed, addressing his hostess. "It reads: 'Action Pacific Union eleven to-morrow—will have advance information either to-night or nine-thirty morning.'"

"Does that relate to the blind pool?" asked Lydia.

"Yes, it certainly does," replied the adroit fisherman.

"And are you decided now as to what to do?" asked the widow, with an ill-disguised attempt to appear calm,

"Yes, I shall form the pool. But to change the subject rather abruptly, let us take a look at the water. I am sure Mr. Orglethorpe will excuse us. The bay is beautiful to-night."

The Baronet offered his arm to Lydia, who waved a coquettish adieu to Reginald, and they passed out. Once out of hearing of the others, she reverted eagerly to the subject of the blind pool.

"Do you really believe money can be made in those pools, Sir Leicester?" she asked.

"I know it," he replied, abruptly.

"How I should like to go in and win something!"

"Nothing would please me more than to take you in with us."

"But I have no money—not a solitary cent."

"Resources are as good as money."

"Resources?" she repeated, in surprise; "what resources have I? My property is mortgaged up to the sky—I can hardly get credit from the trades-people."

"You have . . . a friend."

"Whom do you mean? Mr. Orglethorpe?"

"No; Barclay."

He dropped his arm abruptly. "I would rather die than ask John Barclay for money. He'd only lecture me. Why, even to-night he talked very seriously to me about my extravagances."

"That was about your own money—with his it is different. You don't understand men as I do. John Barclay is a gentleman, and besides, he . . . loves you."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lydia; "he is only a friend."

"There isn't much difference between a friend and an admirer, in the case of a woman like you. The term is merely a matter of—the woman's mood."

For a moment Lydia remained deep in meditation. Then she asked:

"When is the pool to be formed?"

"To-morrow. There is no time to be lost."

"And you are absolutely certain to win?"

"Absolutely. I get my information from a member of the Cabinet, who says that the President will force Congress to act favorably; besides, half of the Congressmen are long of the stock. What can be a better argument?"

Finally Lydia said, with an inflection of resolution: "I'll ask Barclay; but—" she stopped short—"what if he wants to know what it is—?"

Sir Leicester raised his hand deprecatingly.

"Suppose, then," she added, "you find Barclay and send him to me in the drawing-room, Sir Leicester."

A few minutes later John Barclay entered the room where Lydia was seated on a divan. She beckoned him to her side.

"I have sent for you, John, to beg a favor."

"To confer a favor by accepting one," corrected Barclay.

"No, John, I am serious. I want to borrow some money."

Barclay rose and went over to a small writing-desk. He took a seat, drew a small cheque-book from an inner pocket, opened it, picked up a pen, and looked inquiringly at Lydia. "How much shall it be?" he asked.

The widow hesitated. "I don't know exactly—" Then, noticing Barclay's elevated eyebrows, "You see, I want it for—"

But he put up his hand. "My dear Lydia, that is your affair; the question is, how much?"

"Oh, several hundred, say . . . six or seven or eight."

Barclay quickly wrote out a cheque for eight hundred dollars and handed it to Lydia.

"How kind of you to let me have this, John!"

"No, no; you do me a kindness in accepting it."

She was about to say more, when he rose and picked up his hat. "My dear Lydia, I asked Mr. Knowlton to wait for me on the piazza. If you don't mind, I will join him. Shall I send Sir Leicester or Reginald to you?"

"Sir Leicester, if you please, John."

A few moments afterward the Baronet appeared. He took the folded cheque that Lydia handed him and put it into his pocket.

When Sir Leicester reached his room that night he first closed the window blinds against possible observation and then drew out the Barclay cheque. He regarded it long and carefully. "Bah!" he exclaimed, finally, "that's nothing for a man like me to play with! Eight hundred! why, she should have asked him for as many thousands. She could have got it just as easily. The man's her slave, and she knows it."

His disappointment was keen. He felt that he had been cheated. He was a man with whom the gambling mania was so strong that he would sell out his best friend to get means to gratify it—in fact, he would almost sacrifice himself. Educated, familiar with all grades of society, and having a hundred more criminal resources than the ordinary person, he was an exceedingly dangerous man. And Sir Leicester had been driven to the wall by hard luck, or more correctly, by a persistent refusal of the principles of finance to conform to his illegitimate methods. He had selected the widow as likely "spoils," but gossip in the neighborhood disclosed to him the real state of her finances. Then he discovered Barclay's high regard for her and conceived a scheme for profiting by the knowledge. It took some time to court the lady's confidence sufficiently for him to suggest with safety the asking of Barclay for the money. He had been patient and vigilant, never betraying his motive. He had at last made his grand *coup*, and this was the result—a paltry eight hundred dollars! He laughed a low laugh of cynical chagrin—a laugh at himself—at his folly in trusting to the sense of a woman in a matter of finance, as he called his scheming. "Damn it!" he said again; "it should have been eight thousand instead of eight hundred!" He stopped short and looked hard at

the cheque. His last words had suggested an idea.

"Why not?" he said. "I'm blessed if I don't think it can be easily done. It has none of those punch marks in it." The idea worried him—the possibilities of it made him nervous. He got up and paced up and down the room once or twice. "It's no more than I'm entitled to after all the trouble I've had to get it," he resumed. "I have earned it. But . . . what if the market should go down?" He kept torturing himself with futile debate, although, in fact, he had vaguely made up his mind to do the thing when the idea first struck him. He hesitated only from the fear of results. Presently his face brightened. "What a fool I was not to have thought of that at first!" he said. "Hers is the only endorsement on it—they couldn't touch me, could they? Let me see. . . . The market can't go down—my man says the President himself is in it. . . . I wonder how that 'hundred' would rub out."

He took a rubber ink-eraser and applied it to the word. "Beautiful!" he exclaimed, holding the cheque up and admiring his work. "Now . . ." He picked up a pen with a fine nib. "Barclay writes a hand like a woman's, the old dude, but I can write one quite as fine." On a scrap of paper he wrote the word "thousand" many times in imitation of Barclay's style, then, without a tremor, wrote it after the word "eight" on the cheque. "Beautiful again!" he laughed; "now for the 'o'—there; that's all right—no one will ever know the difference. If the market goes up we'll all be happy and safe—if it goes to the devil we'll not be happy, but equally safe—no danger of Lydia being bothered. Barclay, the dude, will be the only loser, and he won't mind; he's as rich as an Astor." He chuckled at his shrewdness, for he was an amiable fellow, and replacing the cheque in his pocket, went peacefully to bed and to sleep, with the bedclothes tucked close up under his chin.

II

THE office of Israel Goldnote & Company was equipped with every device the devil ever invented to whet the appetite for speculation. It was probably the most conspicuous of its kind in Wall street. Rows of luxurious chairs almost begged occupation by the casual visitor. Suave partners and gentlemanly clerks made the stranger feel like a long-lost brother. Vast blackboards covered with rows of confusing figures showed prices obtaining on the exchanges in New York, in Chicago and in Liverpool—stocks, wheat, coffee and what not—“you pays your money and you takes your choice.” It mattered not what your choice was. One thing was certain—you paid your money.

Goldnote ran a confidence game of no mean order. It was a case of the spider and the fly, with Goldnote in the centre of the web. His customers came in relays, were fleeced, got the cold shoulder from the suave partners and the gentlemanly clerks, to whom the word had been passed, and were pushed out, perhaps without even car-fare—which any faro bank would have given them—and replaced by others ready for the shears. Thus the mighty mill of Goldnote & Company went on grinding out victims, for of course business must be kept up, and Goldnote and his suave partners must live.

Goldnote's office was crowded with a lot of “five-hundred-dollar customers,” giving it a schoolroom appearance. They did not all seem happy. Some of them joked, to be sure—the exception to prove the rule—themselves, later on, to become part of the rule—but mostly they were a serious-faced set. Greed, anxiety and disappointed hope had graved lines on their visages until they had come to look like pictures of avarice rather than human beings. They were once good men enough, but they had been hypnotized by illegitimate ambition to “get rich quick,” and reason and

honor were forgotten as they rushed on to inevitable disaster.

Goldnote knew that ninety-nine per cent. of the men who speculate “guess” wrong; why not, then, instead of honestly executing their orders, for one-eighth commission, take the risk himself—give his customers false notifications of purchases or sales and pocket their margins? Should they make a profit, he had money enough to pay the amount. On its face the game was honest enough. Goldnote did not control the market. The laws of finance are immutable, but personal equation is—well, personal equation. It was an unequal contest, with the superior sagacity of Goldnote pitted against the weak credulity of the small man. Although the customer might succeed for a time, Goldnote had no fear that in the end he would not beat himself “guessing.” The office rule was: “Don't let him get away so long as he has a dollar left. Keep him in the market—get him to expand. He's tasted blood—now he's excited—urge him on—he's getting bigger and bigger—now he's up to his neck—give him a little more line—steady!—the crash—ah, he's ours!” Then the word was passed along the line for the suave partners and gentlemanly clerks to give B. D—d the cold shoulder—no more drinks, no more opera—and his bones were flung into the street. If he complained, he was threatened with arrest, but they were careful never to have him arrested, lest Goldnote's methods should be aired in the papers. If the unreasonable customer continued to kick hard they would buy him a ticket to Greenland or Greenpoint—anywhere, so they got rid of him. After the mighty vulture, Goldnote & Company, had feasted to repletion, the little crows were permitted to come up for a scrap; and so sure were they that a victim would fall regularly from Goldnote's mill that they had outposts ready at the firm's very doors to receive him.

It was a happy name, Goldnote. Everything about him indicated the

yellow metal, even his teeth. But beneath all he was nothing but brass. He was a benign-looking man, but shrewd. He gave to a "dead-broke" customer occasionally, but always with a flourish of trumpets. "Look at me, Goldnote, the philanthropist, giving this man money!" was his attitude. One day a gentleman who had been fleeced there drew Goldnote aside and quietly requested a small loan. The banker turned on him, and at a stroke laying his sensitive soul bare, cried, so all could hear: "I'll give you two dollars, but don't come here again!" The shock of the words brought to the surface the last flickering ray of manhood in the wretch, and towering above his insulter, he flung the money into his face and strode out.

It was to this gorgeous den that Sir Leicester repaired on the morning following the cheque-raising performance. Goldnote, who was a thorough sycophant, received the Baronet with much effusion (assumed) and Barclay's cheque with little effusion (genuine). Sir Leicester was conducted at once to a small private office, and instructions given that he was not to be disturbed. Near by, in a room reserved for women, a short, gray-haired female was calling off prices as they came over the tape.

A telegram was handed to the Baronet. He read it and instantly summoned Goldnote. "This says that the President will surely sign the Pacific Union bill. Suppose you purchase a thousand. We have eight thousand dollars."

As the banker turned to execute the order, Sir Leicester added: "By the way, Goldnote, I'm making this transaction for a lady, and want you to put the account in her name. Here's her card."

The banker nodded—he was used to such transactions—and went to the telephone connecting the house with the Stock Exchange. Almost immediately he turned to Sir Leicester. "Your order is executed," he said. "One thousand Pacific Union at 18."

The Baronet regarded the broker with amazement, and the latter hastened to explain. "I had my man right in the Pacific Union crowd," he said. "They deal in large blocks, you know."

"All right," said Sir Leicester; then to himself: "You may 'bucket' the order, but you are good for the difference, I guess, old money-bags."

"Pacific Union, 18," called the gray-haired fiend at the other ticker.

"I wish that woman would be quiet!" muttered Sir Leicester to himself. "I feel horribly nervous. I think I'll send out for a b. and s."

When it was brought he tipped the boy a dime and turned again to the ticker. Just then one of the news agency boys rushed in.

"The President will sign the bill," read one of the suave partners.

Slowly but surely the stock mounted to higher figures. Finally the ancient female speculator announced the "21" mark. Sir Leicester listened with nervous gratification. "I'll have a good story to tell the widow," he thought. He looked at his watch. "By Jove! it's half-past eleven now—I must make haste!" He was about to go out when Goldnote entered the private office. He held in his hand the Barclay cheque.

"As I haven't the pleasure of knowing the lady or Mr. Barclay, Sir Leicester, I'd like to have your endorsement to this. Just as a matter of precaution, you know." This was the fatal detail that the shrewd villain always overlooks. The Baronet's composure was superb. He knew the position in which his signature on the back of the cheque would place him, yet to hesitate would excite Goldnote's suspicion. He had gone thus far voluntarily. He must now go on whether or no.

"Why, certainly." He seized a pen and wrote his name across the cheque in a bold hand. Goldnote thanked him and retired. He handed the cheque back to his cashier. "Send a messenger boy to the Pinehurst Bank and have this certified. It's too big for a country bank."

"I have already telephoned them, and they say Barclay is good for anything he wants."

The banker knitted his brows. "That may be, but just do as I say; get it certified." Then to himself: "I don't like the way Sir Leicester acts to-day. He hasn't got his usual air of cocksureness—seems nervous. There is something wrong somewhere, I'm afraid."

Sir Leicester pondered the matter as he walked along.

"I hardly looked for that, yet I might have known it. I was so eager to get started that I forgot all about it. But so long as the market goes up, what's the odds? I'll sell out soon and take up the cheque, and no one will be any the wiser; but I'm damned if I'll go to jail!"

At the corner he met Lydia and Reginald Orglethorp, and the trio proceeded to the Savarin. When they were seated Lydia removed her gloves, and resting her chin on her interlaced and jeweled fingers, gazed expectantly at Sir Leicester.

"Well?" she said.

"Three thousand, so far," replied the Baronet, attempting to keep down the exultation that almost choked him.

"Three thousand!" repeated Lydia. "Oh, I'm so pleased!" Her eyes shone with gratitude. The Englishman smiled. He was not averse to arrogating to himself full credit for the success of the affair.

"Three thousand!" repeated Lydia. "Did you hear, Reginald?"

Sir Leicester waved his hand deprecatingly. "A mere trifle, my dear Mrs. Villa—a bagatelle."

"It's very kind of you to put it that way, Sir Leicester; but I'm really very appreciative. I have helped many people, but I have never been helped before. So, when in my extremity a rescuer comes, I am truly grateful."

"I wonder how Barclay would like that?" said Sir Leicester to himself.

When the wine came Lydia's spirits rose still higher. "Only think of it!" she said; "three thousand dollars in a

day—or, hold, less than a day—two hours. Why, at that rate, we should make—let's see, how many hours is the Exchange open?"

"Five," said Reginald.

"Well, then, fifteen thousand dollars a day, three hundred days in a year—just lend me your pencil. Why, isn't that wonderful? it's four million five hundred thousand a year!"

"I'm afraid you didn't allow for holidays," remarked Reginald, drily.

"Now don't be nasty, Reggie," said the widow, giving him a look of coquettish reproach out of her soft, warm eyes.

Under the mellowing influence of the champagne the Baronet became communicative. "You see," he said, "I couldn't very well go wrong. I've known Hatteras for years; he's right in the swim in Washington; knows all the Government, from the President down; dines at houses of Cabinet officers, entertains Senators, drinks with Members of Congress, and all that sort of thing galore. I am a man of method—never take chances. 'Buy a thousand,' said I. He bought it—Goldnote bought it. We had made three thousand before I left the office—maybe twice that much ahead now. By the way, Goldnote said he'd advise me here; boy should be here now. You know that stock acts like lightning. Once it starts it's either up or down in a jiffy, and in this case it's up."

"What if the President should refuse to sign the bill?" asked Reginald.

The Baronet frowned. "That's absurd, but in such a remote contingency P. U. would drop like lead—the very bottom would fall out of it. Ah, here is the boy now; faithful Goldnote!"

He took from the messenger the slip and read, "P. U. twenty-two—you'd better sell—Goldnote."

"Sell!" laughed the Baronet. "I'll show him how I'll sell. I'll just double my holdings when I go back."

"Grand!" cried Lydia, flushed. "Lend me your pencil again, Reginald. Just think of it—that will be nine millions a year."

"Look out for the holidays this time," laughed Reginald.

"I think you're a mean fellow to make fun of me, Reginald." Then suddenly she added, "I wonder how Barclay would feel if he knew we were making money so fast."

"If he knew how we were making it he might not be pleased," suggested Reginald.

The suggestion had a double meaning for Sir Leicester, as he thought of Barclay's cheque, and it struck him as amusing.

Again Lydia's thoughts flitted back to Goldnote's suggestion. "Why does he advise you to sell?" she asked, turning to Sir Leicester. "What can it be to him? He is only your broker. Don't you think it rather cheeky of him?"

"That's the way with these fellows," laughed the Baronet; "but there's something more than mere idle solicitude in Goldnote's tip. I believe he's bucketed my order and is afraid I'll hold on till I break him—and I will, too, now that I've got things on the run. But, by the way, speaking of Barclay, what is he, anyway—that is, what is his business?"

"He's a lawyer by profession, but without an occupation," said Lydia.

"I don't wonder. Your laws here are so dreadfully lax—a man can do almost anything, and if he has influence, generally expressed thus—" he wrote on an envelope "\$"—"he will not be molested."

"That's just where you are misinformed, Sir Leicester," replied Reginald, rather warmly. "I have a friend whose father has money to burn, and who would burn it, too, only he has a weak stomach and can't stand the smell of smoke. Now this young man simply 'raised' a cheque, and what do you think he got?"

"Really, I haven't the remotest idea what ridiculous sentence the amusing little chap got," returned the Baronet, with delicious nonchalance.

"Twelve years at hard labor."

"Really!" commented Sir Leicester, adjusting his glasses and picking up the bill of fare with trembling fingers

and looking for nothing in particular. "I'm sorry for the poor chap—not for committing a felony, but for being such a consummate jackass." Then, after a moment's deep thought, "I suppose he raised the wrong man's cheque."

"He thought not—the victim was an old friend of the family, and young Hutchings thought he could square it with him. He was deep in debt and wanted the money to speculate with, but he was a greenhorn—put up money on cats and dogs on advice of a friend, and of course you know the inevitable. His friend was appealed to, but had recently found religion and lost charity—become fanatical—'must not condone crime; must make an example'—and so poor Ned, just out of college with bright prospects, went 'up the river' for twelve years; and every night Haversham, who sent him there, prays that he may repent and come out a good man."

"Speaking of religion," said Sir Leicester, calmly, "reminds me of our quiet friend Barclay; would you call him a religious man? One would almost think he should be a parson. Really, he's good enough and learned enough; the mere putting on of a stock and a collar that joins behind would do the job."

"With all respect to the cloth," said Reginald, "I know of a few who ought to wear collars that join behind."

"No, you are mistaken in Barclay, Sir Leicester," said Lydia; "he's not the hopelessly good man you think him."

"Well, well, I'm glad of that," said the Baronet, laughing a little. "I like Barclay, and was getting quite gloomy about him. In fact, I had begun to think him the most guileless man I ever met."

"You mistook undemonstrativeness for guilelessness, Sir Leicester."

"Well, I'm glad that I did, yet I always flattered myself I could read men."

"The mistake is, you men don't know where to read. You see only the lines, and nothing between them."

Don't you know that the lines are put there by design, perhaps, for you to read? Their true significance it takes women to discover."

Sir Leicester looked at Lydia over his wineglass with enthusiastic admiration. "By Jove!" he thought, "I'd like to marry her!" Then aloud, "Quite true, Mrs. Villa; women of cleverness."

Lydia's color heightened. "It's not cleverness, Sir Leicester," she replied, "it's intuition. You men *guess* with your heads—we women *read* with our hearts."

"And you read Barclay with your heart," suggested Sir Leicester, smiling.

"I don't require to, I can read him with my head. He's the easiest man in the whole world to understand. His chief charm is consistency. He is honest, and consequently unsuspecting. He was taught to love honor and to hate dishonor. He's the most loyal friend in the world—"

"I imagine so," broke in Sir Leicester.

"To those who are loyal to him, I mean."

"And," suggested Sir Leicester, "equally unforgiving, I suppose, to those who are not."

"Quite."

"Ah!"

"And he has one pet hatred."

"Speculation?"

"Gambling, he calls it."

"Speculation if you win, gambling if you lose, I suspect."

"It's the only thing he gets in a rage about."

"Fancy Barclay in a rage!"

"It's not pleasant, I assure you. Beware of the wrath of a patient man. He's particularly intolerant of 'points' and 'special information,' as he calls them—says 'dead-sure things' are dead-sure losers."

Sir Leicester sipped his champagne and smiled indulgently. "Preaches from his father's book, I suppose?" he asked.

"No, from the blackest page of his own experience, he says."

"Ah!"

"Reginald and I are to call for him at his attorney's office, to go down with us. We'll pick you up on the way. But don't let on we are speculating."

"Trust me for that. He may alter his tone about speculation when I've given him a few lessons."

"Well, it's a delicious game, anyway," laughed Lydia, "and it's a good one, too. It's going to retrieve my fortune for me, and what's more, I don't care how Barclay preaches against it."

"Here's to the yacht!" cried Reginald, lifting his glass.

"And here is to the Florida trip!" said Lydia.

"And here's that we may all be in heaven ten years before the devil knows we are dead!" said the Baronet.

Outside, Sir Leicester left his companions and proceeded direct to Goldnote's office. On his way he met a boy with yellow news slips. He noticed at the top of one the line, "The President Refuses." His heart palpitated strangely for a moment, and he quickened his steps. At the entrance to the office Goldnote met him and silently handed him a slip. The banker's face was serious. A great apprehension crept over Sir Leicester. He went quickly to the private office, and closing the door, unfolded the note with nervous fingers. It read: "Sold 1,000 P. U. at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$."

For a moment the Baronet looked out on the passing throng, but saw it not. Through force of habit, as if trying to convince himself that he was calm, he took a cigarette from a jeweled case and thrust it between his lips; then he lighted a match, but allowed it to burn itself out, and relaxing his hold, let the charred end fall to the carpet. His head was bent forward; his eyes stared vacantly. Slowly he tore the notice of sale to bits and absently threw the small pieces away.

Then the thoughts that came to him comprehended almost all of the

experiences of his unprincipled career. Unconsciously he sought to justify many of the dishonorable acts that stood conspicuous milestones down the highway of his past. By the law of paradoxes he thought of trifles as well. He realized that his last trump was played—he had reached, absolutely, the end of his line. He had burned his bridges in England behind him; now he had lost Lydia's friendship. The fact that he had sought to put her between himself and disaster caused him no remorse. Could he "square" himself with Barclay? Lydia's words, "To those who are loyal to him," sprang up to negative the suggestion. Besides, were Barclay to find out that he had tried to sacrifice Lydia, his resentment would be implacable. Then his thoughts again spread over his past. He was neither ashamed nor proud of it. He didn't care. He thought of his mother, and felt a quick resentment as he remembered how she had compelled him to practice penmanship. It had always been a temptation to him—she was remotely responsible for his present fix. She had also taught him the use of the pistol—he smiled grimly as he placed the two circumstances in juxtaposition; "cause and effect," he muttered, ironically—"from pen to pistol." The momentousness of it all compelled a calmness at which he wondered. The future! He thought of young Hutchings, "up the river." He had no future in this world—he wondered vaguely whether there were one in the next. His alert mind searched the field of his experience for a method of escape; there was none.

Presently he drew a pistol from his pocket, placed it to his temple and pulled the trigger.

Instantly the noise in the outer rooms ceased. The customers looked at one another with sudden apprehension. Goldnote stepped quickly and lightly to the door of the private office. He paused with his hand on the knob as if fearing the worst, then opened the door and—found it. The spider had lost the fly. For a mo-

ment his face remained white under the shock, but self-interest prompted him to move. He closed the door quietly and went over to the cashier's desk. "The cheque," he asked—"the Barclay cheque—has it come back?"

"Wanted at the 'phone, sir," broke in an office boy, addressing the cashier.

"Mr. Goldnote!" called the cashier from the telephone box a moment later.

"What is it?" asked the banker, stepping over.

"I have just received a message that the boy who had the cheque was in a trolley accident. He was injured slightly and the cheque was lost. Would you like to speak with him?—I am holding the wire."

Goldnote said nothing, but walked away toward the private office; a "bluecoat" was standing close outside of the closed door. Just then a lady and two gentlemen entered the office. One of the two advanced to Goldnote.

"We wish to see Sir Leicester," he said. Goldnote pointed to the policeman.

"You'd better ask him," he replied, abruptly.

"What's the matter? Under arrest?"

"Dead!"

The gentleman immediately rejoined his companions, and they left the office. Once outside, Barclay said: "There's been an accident, Lydia. Reginald, you take Mrs. Villa home and I'll come down later and explain everything."

When Barclay returned to Goldnote's office he noticed a marked change in the banker's manner.

"You must pardon me," said Goldnote, "I did not know that you were Mr. Barclay until my cashier told me so. This is a most unfortunate affair—most unfortunate," he added, rubbing his hands. "But," and he drew Barclay aside, "perhaps you will be good enough to give us a duplicate of the cheque that Sir Leicester deposited with us this morning. It was

your cheque, you know. We sent it for certification, and the boy lost the envelope in a trolley accident."

"For how much?"

"Eight thousand dollars."

"What was it used for?"

"Margin on 1,000 shares of P. U., bought at 18, sold at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$."

"I never issued such a cheque."

Goldnote looked aghast at Barclay. "Never issued it!" he gasped. "Then it's a forgery! What a damned knave that Baronet is!"

"No, he's not a knave; he's dead."

The broker reflected a moment. "But there are those who are not dead who are equally responsible, and I'll make them sweat for this!" he said.

Barclay straightened up. "To whom do you refer?"

"The woman who was in here with you just now."

"What can she have to do with this transaction?"

"Her endorsement was on the cheque and the account was in her name."

Barclay changed color. The banker noted the effect of his words, and went on: "Perhaps to save her any embarrassment you will consent now to issue a duplicate cheque, Mr. Barclay."

"Certainly I will," replied Barclay. The banker smiled. "Just you send me a letter," Barclay continued, "with the names of the man on the Stock Exchange from whom you bought that P. U. and of the man to whom you sold it, and I'll send you a duplicate cheque."

Goldnote scowled, and Barclay turned and left the place. He went direct to the office of his attorney, who was a very old friend. "Hamilton," he said, "I want you to take entire charge of this unfortunate business. I'll send you the address of the family in England, and you are to send our friend back."

Hamilton laid his hand affectionately on Barclay's arm. "John," he said, "you're a most extraordinary fellow. This man borrowed money from you during his life and sponged on you, and he's playing you for a 'sucker'."

after he's dead. What did he amount to, anyway?"

"He was only one of the conspicuous ciphers of life, that's all," answered Barclay.

The thought of Lydia free from a fancied entanglement awakened again the old spirit of unrest in him—the old spirit of hope. He had thought the one conquered, the other dead. There was now no obstacle in the way. He would wait a respectable time and then lay his heart at her feet.

Meantime, Lydia suffered a frenzy of apprehension regarding the cheque. Had Barclay found out anything? She had told him repeatedly that she would never engage in speculation. What would he think of her? She was, therefore, much perplexed when the same evening she received the following despatch from him:

Gone San Francisco; return three weeks from to-day.

III

As Barclay approached New York on the limited three weeks later he was the victim of many emotions. He loved Lydia in a chivalrous way. He was no longer a boy, no longer a creature of impulse, yet he recognized many a long forgotten feeling returning as the possibility of realizing his old dream of happiness increased. When he reached New York he debated whether to go direct to Pinehurst or first to his hotel; he decided on the latter course. His old servant received him with delight and handed him a letter marked "Personal." "It came a week ago," he said.

Barclay recognized Lydia's handwriting. He tore open the envelope:

DEAR JOHN:

I know you'll be astonished, but Reginald and I were married last week. I send this to your hotel, as I do not know where else to write you. I will come to see you immediately I return.

LYDIA.

Barclay returned the letter to the envelope and put it into his pocket. "You may go," he said to his servant. About an hour afterward the servant entered with a telegram. John took it.

Ponce de Leon,
St. Augustine.
No funds. Please help us out.
LYDIA.

Barclay wrote out a cheque for a thousand dollars, then turned to his servant. "Ask the cashier to cash that, then wire it to this address." He picked up a telegraph blank and wrote:

MR. AND MRS. REGINALD ORGLETHORP,
Ponce de Leon,
St. Augustine, Fla.
Congratulations. JOHN BARCLAY.

For an hour Barclay remained in meditation. Finally he put his hand into his pocket, drew forth his pocket-book and took out a letter and a cheque. The letter was:

DEAR BARCLAY:

I found this cheque in an envelope near the trolley smash-up, and I send it by messenger.

WARD.

The cheque he unfolded and scrutinized closely. He turned it over and carefully read the signatures on the back: "Lydia Villa, Leicester Bunsby." He held the cheque by one corner over the fire and allowed the other end to engage the flames. In a moment it was nothing but smoke.

"It doesn't matter who did it," he mused; "the one is a woman and the other is dead."



THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY

"THE same voice, but alas! a different tone!
Its music once seemed deathless as the stars.
It sang of love, and of our love alone;
The notes are still the same—yet the song jars!

"The same eyes, but alas! a different glance
From that which in the old days sought my face,
Wrapping me round with tenderest romance
In an ethereal yet warm embrace!

"The same lips, but alas! a different kiss!
Something is gone. What is it? Speak, mine own!"
"Our dear, dead passion is a chrysalis—
The golden butterfly of love has flown!"

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



CELESTIAL COSTUMES

HUSBAND—I wonder what we shall wear in heaven.
WIFE—Well, if you get there, John, I imagine most of us will wear surprised looks.

THE BLUE PINCUSHION

By M. Q. Dixon

MRS. AUBREY'S boudoir. Fireplace, table with books, writing-desk and dressing-table with candles, mirror and accessories of toilet. Mrs. Aubrey seated before the dressing-table, in evening dress, while the maid fastens an aigrette in her hair.

LIZETTE—*Voilà, madame! c'est parfait! You are beau-ti-ful tonight! Regardez! (Hands her mistress a small mirror with which to examine the back of her hair.)*

MRS. AUBREY—Nonsense, Lizette! I am hideous! I wish I were not going to this stupid dinner.

LIZETTE—*Mais, pourquoi donc, madame? Votre robe est belle.*

MRS. AUBREY—I look pale and haggard—my eyes are heavy.

LIZETTE—*Eh bien! If madame will permit—a little rouge?*

MRS. AUBREY—Oh, no, Lizette! it doesn't matter. Nothing matters now. (*Gets up and walks over to the fire.*) I am cold.

LIZETTE—Will you have some wine, madame?

MRS. AUBREY—No.

Lizette pushes a chair before the fire for Mrs. Aubrey.

MRS. AUBREY—Bring me my fan and gloves, Lizette; then take my wraps, and tell Briggs that I shall want the carriage at seven promptly.

LIZETTE—*Oui, madame.*

A knock at the door. Enter Mr. Aubrey, excitedly.

MR. AUBREY—Well, Mrs. Aubrey, here I am!

MRS. AUBREY—So I see, Mr. Aubrey. Did you give up the idea of running over to Philadelphia to-day?

MR. AUBREY—Yes.

MRS. AUBREY—Then your business was not so urgent, after all?

MR. AUBREY—Naturally I could not go after receiving your enigmatical telegram.

MRS. AUBREY—Enigmatical?

MR. AUBREY—Rather! (*Reads:*)

“If you go to Philadelphia to-day, I will forward letter in my possession to Mr. Légeré by next mail.

“Signed,

“ELEANOR AUBREY.”

Will you please explain this, madam? To what letter do you refer?

MRS. AUBREY (*coldly*)—To one that arrived within ten minutes after you started down town this morning. It was in an envelope bearing your office address. Fearing that it might be of importance, I opened the envelope, and out of it dropped a letter addressed in a lady's handwriting—

MR. AUBREY (*aside*)—I'll discharge that clerk to-morrow.

MRS. AUBREY—And bearing a Philadelphia postmark.

MR. AUBREY—And you opened this letter? I think, Mrs. Aubrey, that you might respect my private correspondence. You will give me the letter, if you please.

MRS. AUBREY—Oh, no, Mr. Aubrey. I shall keep it as a gentle reminder.

MR. AUBREY—You will do nothing of the kind. The letter is mine.

MRS. AUBREY—Possession is nine points of the law.

MR. AUBREY—You will certainly not think of sending it to Mr. Légeré? Even the most innocent action, in the eyes of a jealous husband, assumes enormous proportions. I pre-

sume you would not wish to injure the reputation of an innocent woman or cause a duel between Mr. Légère and myself.

MRS. AUBREY—You acknowledge, then, that the letter is from Mrs. Légère, and that you are in the habit of receiving letters from her?

MR. AUBREY—Not *habit*, Mrs. Aubrey, but I have had the honor of attending to some law matters for Mrs. Légère.

MRS. AUBREY (*scornfully*)—Is Mr. Légère aware that you are his wife's *homme d'affaires*? He might not be pleased with the situation.

MR. AUBREY—You are absurd! Mrs. Légère is an old friend, and there is no possible reason why she should not consult me in regard to her affairs. You will give me that letter at once, Mrs. Aubrey. It may be of the greatest importance.

MRS. AUBREY—Oh, no! I fancy it is nothing that cannot wait. Besides—I am dining out this evening, so permit me to wish you a pleasant evening at home.

MR. AUBREY—Shall I put you in the carriage?

MRS. AUBREY—Pray don't take that trouble. Lizette has my wraps. (*Exit.*)

MR. AUBREY (*alone*)—Well, here's the old boy to pay! (*Walks aimlessly about the room, looking to right and left; stops before the fire and lights a cigarette.*) I hope Eleanor will pardon me if I smoke here. I must have something to soothe my nerves. (*Sinks into a chair.*) What shall I do? I am in a critical situation! Everything depends on what Marie wrote in the letter. She surely could not have been foolish enough to say that she expected me in Philadelphia; but then—women have no sense in these matters. It is too bad, after all the precautions I took—that clerk is an idiot! I expressly told him to keep letters bearing a Philadelphia postmark at the office until my return. Now, the letter may be harmless; then, again, it may be the reverse. Oh, if I could but find it! Where can she have concealed it?

Walks about the room, searches drawers of desk, overturns newspapers and books, pillows and rugs, and then throws himself exhausted on couch.

I must put myself absolutely in her place. Like Sherlock Holmes, I must think with her mind. Let me see. She is a curious woman, inclined to be suspicious and secretive; has the bump of caution largely developed, therefore she would not be likely to destroy the letter; and her sense of honor would, I think, prevent her from opening it—unless, indeed, she were *very jealous*. This knowledge of her character has enabled me to play a bluff game thus far. If she *had* read the letter, and there was anything compromising in it, would she betray the knowledge by her manner? Is she leading me into a pit by feigning ignorance? I don't think so. She likes to have the things she values always about her. She would want to assure herself often of the safety of the letter—therefore it would be among the articles she uses constantly. Let me think. I have it—her dressing-table.

Jumps up, lights candles on dressing-table, sits down before it, picks up the silver toilet articles, examines boxes of gloves and handkerchiefs. Then sits gazing intently at his own reflection in the mirror.

No use—it's not here. Guess I'll have to give it up. (*Yawns.*) What a bore! (*Leans his head back against the chair, still gazing intently into the mirror. Face becomes set like face of one in a trance. Clock strikes eight. Starts and rubs his eyes.*) By Jove! have I been asleep? No, I am wide awake, but I certainly saw my wife's face in the glass instead of my own! I saw her distinctly! And she had in her hands a blue pincushion! Ah! this very one! (*Takes up pincushion, examines it. A silver hatpin falls to the floor.*) Pshaw! I am a fool for my pains. I'll go to bed. (*Takes up hatpin and sticks it savagely into cushion.*) Hello! What's that? Paper? The pin won't go through! (*Glances at clock.*) Eight o'clock! I have two good hours before she will return!

(Takes a pair of scissors and rips open side of cushion, pouring the sawdust into a newspaper.)

(Excitedly) Ah, ha! here it is! (Holds up a letter.) It is from Marie. Thank God! it has not been opened! (Opens carefully with the aid of a penknife. Reads:—)

"MON CHER AMI:

"I live in the expectation of your speedy arrival. Do not fail to come on Wednesday, as agreed.

"MARIE."

(With a sigh) I think it will be well to destroy this. (Holds it over the flame of a candle. Goes to desk and takes a blank piece of paper.) There! I'll put in a blank that will tell no tales. (Reseals letter and returns it to cushion.) Heavens! what an escape! Now for a needle. I'm not much of a seamstress, but I must fix this cushion somehow. (Mends cushion, covering stitches carefully with lace and ribbons; replaces on dressing-table; blows out candles. Throws himself on couch.)

Later. Mrs. Aubrey enters.)

MRS. AUBREY—Poor old fellow! he's asleep. It was rather mean of me to keep him from going to Philadelphia to-day. (Takes off cloak.) I don't believe there was anything in that old letter, after all. Aubrey, wake up, it is nearly twelve o'clock.

MR. AUBREY—Oh! ah! what is it? Have you returned, my dear? I hope you enjoyed your party.

MRS. AUBREY—No, it was horribly stupid.

MR. AUBREY—I'm very sorry.

MRS. AUBREY—Look here, Aubrey, I've changed my mind. I'll give you the letter, and you can go over to Philadelphia, on condition—

MR. AUBREY—I assure you, my love, that I don't care in the least about the letter.

MRS. AUBREY—On condition that you do not go to see Mrs. Légère while you are there—it was not her business you were going over about this time—and that you will ask her to get another lawyer to attend to her affairs in the future. There! am I not generous?

MR. AUBREY—The fact is, my dear, I don't wish to see the letter now. I was only annoyed at your want of faith in me.

MRS. AUBREY—Oh, yes, you do. I'll go and get it. You could never guess where I have hidden it! (Goes to dressing-table and returns with cushion.)

MR. AUBREY (aside)—Now may heaven preserve me! Courage, Aubrey, old boy!

MRS. AUBREY (bringing a low stool, which she places beside her husband, and sitting)—Now, you would never imagine that it was in this cushion, would you, Aubrey?

MR. AUBREY—Oh, no, my love; never in the world! What made you think of such a place?

MRS. AUBREY—How curious! I was sure that the bow was on the left side. (Rips cushion and takes out letter. Holding it up) Do you want it?

MR. AUBREY (with indifference)—Oh, no, I don't believe it is of any importance.

MRS. AUBREY (smiling)—Well, give me your promise, and then we'll agree just to put the letter in the fire as it is, without opening.

MR. AUBREY—With all my heart. (Both rise.)

MRS. AUBREY—One, two, three; here it goes! (Lets letter fall into the fire.)

MR. AUBREY—But you must promise never to be jealous again.

MRS. AUBREY—Never! never! (They embrace.)



AT A CHURCH WEDDING

SHE—The groom seems embarrassed.

HE—He is. He is marrying her for her money.

LOVE LINGERED

LOVE lingered at my threshold all the day,
 And dew-drenched sunbeams were his pleading eyes;
 I hushed my heart lest he should hear its cries,
 I scourged my lips lest they should bid him stay,
 I held his hands lest he should go away—
 And still he lingered, all too weak, too wise
 To waste the moment ere he must arise
 And go his path, on through the twilight gray,
 Swift through the darkness to the house of Her.
 And not one kiss I took from out her store,
 And not one word of all the words there were.
 And since her arms may home him evermore,
 God, who is merciful and understands,
 Forgives me that I held him by the hands!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



INCONSIDERATE INCREDULITY

DAUGHTER—Father, I fear I hurt the Count's feelings.

FATHER—In what way?

“I thoughtlessly told him I didn't believe he owed as much as he said he did.”



A LESSON

MY Lady got mad
 For my kissing her hand,
 And I was quite glad
 My Lady got mad—
 A way that she had
 I now understand;
 My Lady got mad
 For my kissing her hand.

R. J. SMITH.



VERY LIKELY

WILLIAMSON—The man that pays as he goes doesn't miss anything.
 HENDERSON—He misses the money.

FAUSSE MANŒUVRE

Par Xanrof

DIX HEURES du soir, par une nuit sereine de juillet.
Les invités du château font dans le parc, et par petits groupes, la promenade quotidienne.

La jolie veuve de Saint-Cassette est, selon son habitude, flanquée de ses deux amoureux; à droite, le petit Letronquoy; à gauche, le Marquis Lancre de Lancrier. Ceci indique que c'est un jour impair. Les jours pairs, Letronquoy prend la gauche et le marquis passe à droite. Mais tous deux, immuablement, depuis quatre mois qu'ils ont posé leur candidature à la main de la charmante veuve, l'encadrent matin et soir, chacun d'eux plaident sa cause et débinant son voisin, sans que Madame de Saint-Cassette arrive à se décider.

Letronquoy a pour lui ses vingt ans et sa belle humeur; mais le marquis a son titre et son grand air, car si ce n'est plus un jeune homme, il est droit comme un peuplier qui porterait corset, et arbore des cheveux d'un noir implacable.

LETRONQUOY (*gaîment*) — Enfin, voyons, madame, quand, quand, quand vous déciderez-vous à faire le malheur du marquis?

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*estomaquée*) — Vous dites?

LETRONQUOY — Et mon bonheur, à moi. (*Plus bas et l'attirant un peu vers la droite*) Car c'est moi que vous choisisrez, j'en suis sûr? Je suis jeune, gai, gentil.

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*souriant*) — Toqué!

LETRONQUOY — Justement! Vous verrez quel aimable mari je ferai!

LE MARQUIS (*agacé et ramenant*)

Madame de Saint-Cassette vers la gauche) — Qu'est-ce que Letronquoy vous raconte?

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE — Qu'il fera un mari charmant!

LE MARQUIS — Lui? Un gamin sans cervelle! (*Plus bas et avec sentiment*) Ce qu'il vous faut, c'est un homme encore jeune, mais mûr pour le mariage; un homme pour qui l'amour ne soit pas une amusette, mais le but de toute sa vie, et dont le cœur sincère —

LETRONQUOY (*agacé*) — Qu'est-ce qu'il vous chante donc, le marquis?

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE — Qu'il fera un meilleur mari que vous, qui êtes trop jeune!

LETRONQUOY (*gouailleur*) — Il me trouve trop vert; c'est peut-être parce qu'il ne l'est plus assez!

LE MARQUIS (*qui a entendu, se récriant*) — Qu'est-ce que vous dites? Est-ce que j'ai l'air âgé, monsieur? Je vous déifie de me trouver un cheveu blanc!

LETRONQUOY (*affectant d'être pris d'une toux soudaine*) — Hem! hem!

LE MARQUIS (*verré*) — Monsieur, je ne souffrirai pas —

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*s'interposant*) — Eh bien! Qu'est-ce que c'est, messieurs? Pas de dispute, je vous le défends. . . . Et je vous promets de prendre une décision — le plus tôt possible. Là, je suis gentille?

LE MARQUIS (*lui baisant la main*) — Adorable!

LETRONQUOY (*rêveur*) — Pas un cheveu blanc! Au fait, ça me semble louche, ça à son âge. (*Soupçonneux*) Est-ce que? Il faudra que je fasse ma petite enquête, moi!

Ils continuent leur promenade à trois, telle une garniture de cheminée en ballade.

II

Huit heures du matin, devant la petite porte du parc, à l'heure où doit passer le facteur.

Un homme attend fébrilement le préposé à la correspondance et se promène de long en large, enveloppé d'un manteau de teinte indécise, mais pas couleur de muraille. Depuis qu'on a pris l'habitude de couvrir celles-ci d'affiches éclatantes, un manteau qui prendrait leur aspect bariolé serait une fichue précaution pour quelqu'un qui désire ne pas éveiller l'attention.

L'homme qui guette le facteur n'est autre que Letronquoy, à qui une enquête discrète, mais coûteuse, auprès de la domesticité, a appris que le marquis reçoit régulièrement tous les huit jours un petit flacon d'une mystérieuse mixture. Après quoi, il s'enferme dans sa chambre pour en ressortir deux heures après, les cheveux brillants et noirs à désespérer tous les beaux des environs.

Le facteur paraît.

LETRONQUOY (*se précipitant*)—Vous avez quelque chose pour le Marquis de Lancrier?

LE FACTEUR (*sans défiance*)—Voilà, monsieur. (*Il lui remet un petit paquet et s'éloigne.*)

LETRONQUOY—Merci!

Resté seul, il défait le paquet d'une main criminelle et tremblante. Une fiole apparaît avec l'étiquette: Teinture capillaire extra!

LETRONQUOY (*triomphant*)—Tralala! (*Il esquisse un pas de danse.*) Eh bien! Il peut l'attendre, sa teinture! Ah! ah! pas un cheveu blanc, nous allons bien voir!

Et se dirigeant vers une mare solitaire, il envoie la fiole au milieu d'une famille de paisibles grenouilles. Puis, son forfait accompli, il rentre au château, tout guilleret, et croise sans remords le Marquis de Lancrier en train d'interroger nerveusement le valet de chambre.

LE VALET DE CHAMBRE—J'ai l'honneur de répéter à M. le Marquis que le facteur ne m'a rien remis pour M. le Marquis!

LE MARQUIS (*qui a l'air très préoccupé*)—C'est étrange! Enfin, ça sera peut-être pour demain. Faites bien attention. C'est un petit paquet. Vous me le monterez.

III

Trois jours après le petit Letronquoy, qui ne s'est pas vanté de sa canaillerie, continue seul sa cour auprès de la jolie veuve. Le marquis ne bouge plus de sa chambre, où il attend fébrilement une nouvelle fiole réclamée d'urgence à son fournisseur. Il l'espère vainement, d'ailleurs; le matin même, l'implacable Letronquoy l'a subtilisée et l'a envoyée rejoindre la première dans la mare aux grenouilles.

LETRONQUOY (*pressant Madame de Saint-Cassette*)—Voyons, ne me donnerez-vous pas enfin cette réponse promise? Ne me direz-vous pas ce "oui" tant attendu? Vous devez avoir choisi entre le marquis et moi!

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*coquette*)—Peut-être. Mais je ne veux rendre mon arrêt que devant les deux plaideurs. Or, je ne sais ce qu'a le marquis; voici trois jours qu'il est souffrant, paraît-il. Il ne tardera pas, sans doute, à reparaitre. Alors, seulement, je parlerai!

LETRONQUOY (*perplexe, à part*)—Diable! c'est que le marquis est capable de filer à l'anglaise, pour ne pas exhiber sa tête sans teinture! Oh! quelle idée! (*Haut*) Comme ça se trouve! J'oubliais, chère madame—le marquis ne peut descendre encore aujourd'hui, à cause de sa tête.

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*apitoyée*)—Ah! il a des migraines?

LETRONQUOY (*échant de garder son sérieux*)—Oui, justement! Mais si vous vouliez venir lui dire bonjour avec moi, dans sa chambre, vous lui feriez bien plaisir!

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*se levant*)—Comment donc! Mais avec plaisir. Ce pauvre ami!

LETRONQUOY (*lui offrant le bras*)—
Et si vous voulez alors profiter de ce que nous serons réunis pour choisir? (*A part, enchanté de son idée*) Je suis bien tranquille. Il doit être fortement décoloré à l'heure qu'il est! Quand elle l'aura vu comme ça, elle n'hésitera plus! (*Il rit d'avance du tableau.*)

IV

LE MARQUIS (*dans sa chambre, et dans une colère noire, mais qui ne peut malheureusement lui servir de teinture*)—Qu'est-ce que fiche donc ce coiffeur? Trois jours de retard, c'est inimaginable! (*Se regardant dans la glace*) Ça y est! Me voilà poivre et sel! Impossible de me montrer! Quand je pense que, pendant ce temps-là, Letronquoy avance ses affaires auprès de Madame de Saint-Cassette. Oh! oh! oh! Et ne pas même pouvoir me mettre à la fenêtre! (*On frappe.*) Qui est là?

LETRONQUOY (*déguisant sa voix*)—C'est le facteur!

LE MARQUIS (*ivre de joie*)—Enfin! Ça n'est pas malheureux! (*Il ouvre et se trouve nez à nez avec Letronquoy et Madame de Saint-Cassette.*) Ah! sa perlopinopipette!

LETRONQUOY (*rayonnant et goguenard*)—C'est une jolie surprise, hein, mon bon?

LE MARQUIS (*tout à fait décontent et tâchant de rester à contre-jour*)—Comment donc! Que c'est donc gentil à vous, chère madame! Asseyez-vous donc.

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE—Alors, ça ne va pas, hein, cette affreuse migraine?

LE MARQUIS (*tirant vivement son mouchoir et s'en enveloppant les cheveux du mieux qu'il peut*)—Oh! ne m'en parlez pas! Ce que je souffre!

LETRONQUOY (*trahitusement*)—Mais, mais?—je ne me trompe pas! On dirait que vous avez blanchi?

Il soulève un coin du mouchoir, la tempe apparaît toute blanche.

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*stupéfaite*)—Dieu me pardonne! mais c'est vrai? Vous êtes tout blanc!

LE MARQUIS (*prenant un grand parti*)—Eh bien! oui! Que voulez-vous? C'est votre faute, madame!

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE—Comment cela?

LE MARQUIS (*avec l'âme*)—Je vous aime tant. Alors, de voir que vous ne vouliez pas m'accorder votre main—de penser que vous ne m'aimiez pas, que vous ne m'aimeriez jamais—ça m'a causé tant de chagrin—un désespoir si violent—

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*profondément émue*)—Comment! c'est ça qui vous a fait blanchir les cheveux?

LE MARQUIS (*avec un aplomb imperturbable*)—Oui!

LETRONQUOY (*étourdi du coup*)—Eh bien! par exemple!

MADAME DE SAINT-CASSETTE (*essuyant une larme*)—Ah! marquis, une femme est bien fière d'inspirer une telle passion! (*A Letronquoy*) Vous me demandiez tout à l'heure qui je choisissais, Monsieur Letronquoy? (*Mettant sa main dans celle du marquis*) Après une aussi éclatante preuve d'amour, l'hésitation n'est plus possible!

LE MARQUIS (*au comble de la joie*)—Ah! madame! Ah! marquise! (*Il lui baise la main avec transport.*)

LETRONQUOY (*horriblement vexé*)—J'ai été malin, moi! Enfin! (*Haut*) Toutes mes félicitations, mon cher marquis—(*ironique*)—et espérons que si le chagrin vous a blanchi les cheveux, le bonheur que vous venez d'éprouver ne tardera pas à vous les renoircir.



SHE WANTED A SHOW

MR. TWEEDS—I'd make some woman a No. 1 husband.

MRS. WEEDS—But what is your objection to marrying a widow?

VAGABONDS

GOD gave unto the philistine,
 Who toils at desk or mart,
 The silver pieces broad and fine
 And broidered coat and smart,
 But gave, oh brothers, for our part
 The roving foot and free;
 The children of the merry heart—
 Life's vagabonds are we.

The elder son hath glowing hearth
 And quiet home and house;
 The younger son hath all the earth
 Wherein he may carouse.
 The elder son his goodly spouse
 For once and all has ta'en;
 Upon the younger's tattered blouse
 More heads than one have lain.

Then ho, for stirrup and for spur,
 Across the world away!
 Nor pause to snatch a kiss from her
 We courted yesterday.
 'Tis some must dance and some must play,
 Some pay and some go free.
 God keep you, sirs, who stare and stay—
 Life's vagabonds are we!

JOHN WINWOOD.



NOT A PLEASING OUTLOOK

HE—Did you tell your father that I wished to see him?
SHE—Yes; he's getting ready now.



IN THE BALANCE

WHOMe'er has suffered—he has lived but half;
 Who ne'er has failed—he never strove or sought;
 Who ne'er has wept is stranger to a laugh,
 And he who never doubted never thought.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.

BLUE-EYED ELIPHALET

By Arabella Kenealy

“**M**Y dear Dallas,” Eleanor wrote, “do you never mean to pay me your long-promised visit? I have not seen you since you were a child. I much wish to meet you. I was fond of your father. The season is virtually over, so do, there is a good creature, run down here for a fortnight or three weeks. I hear you are clever. I must find out what you are doing with your talents. They tell me you have tendencies to fritter. My dear, don’t fritter! In a world crammed with interests and work it is a sin to fritter. Whatsoever you do, do it seriously, and as the Americans say, ‘for all you are worth.’ I have been so long associated with the woman’s movement that I can promise you excellent advice on any line of activity you feel disposed to take up. I adjure you not to allow yourself to drift. Decide what is your bent and go for it—go for it heart and soul. To a good-looking young woman—I remember you as good-looking—to drift means to marry. For goodness’ sake, don’t marry without most profoundly deliberating the question. When I was your age I drifted. *Ergo*, I married—married without most profoundly deliberating the question. The result is Eliphilet! You don’t know my husband. I have no fault to find with him. He does not interfere with me in any way. But in my busy, absorbing life he is a mere superfluity. However, come and see us. I shall not write again. Nor do you trouble to write except to send me a line the day previous to your arrival. Indeed, my correspondence has assumed such dimensions that it will be a charity on

your part if you merely wire. I am here for the next three months. Choose your own time within this limit. Come and renew our old friendship, and make Eliphilet’s acquaintance. Till then, believe me,

“Your affectionate cousin,
“ELEANOR.”

Dallas laid down the letter with a sigh of comfort.

“Did anything ever happen more opportunely?” she reflected. “If Eleanor had known the actual circumstances she could not have better come to the rescue. Drifting! it is exactly what I am doing, what I have been doing for the last three months, and drifting, as Eleanor predicts, into an uncongenial marriage. If I don’t take to my heels and run for it, between mother and Ralph Dorrington I shall be Mrs. Dorrington before the year is out, and I have not the smallest desire to change either my name or my estate.”

So she mused, a smile on her lips, a crease between her lovely brows. She was scarcely a beauty. Her eyes were fine, her brows perfect. The difference between mere prettiness and beauty is more often than not a question of eyebrows. A woman with good eyebrows *may* not be a beauty, a woman with poor eyebrows cannot be. The smile on her lips was dedicated to Eliphilet.

“How could she expect to be fond of a man with such a name? It absolutely spells weak eyes, a straggly beard and a tendency to total abstinence. And my dear Eleanor, you need not have gone out of your way to explain that you don’t love Eliph-

let. If you did you would long since have found some less abominable title for him. Now I wonder how one could abbreviate 'Eliphalet!'

She was a whimsical person, and she sat some moments smilingly transposing, curtailing and otherwise cajoling the obnoxious name. She came out of the ordeal with a happy thought.

"Why, 'Phil,' of course!" she decided. "There is a solution of the difficulty. I'll suggest it when I see her. If she were to call him Phil they might get on better."

A week later, having sent a line "the day before," she set forth on her visit.

The Sterns had their home in the heart of the country. Stern was squire of his village, which was four miles distant from a station. They called it a station; it was mentioned at intervals in the railway guides, and the trains certainly stopped there, otherwise it had more the appearance of a temporary scaffolding. The station master, who was apparently porter and booking clerk and every official beside, did not attempt to conceal his astonishment at the appearance of a passenger on his platform—indeed, he seemed almost to resent it as a piece of uncalled-for intrusion. He became more attentive and quickened his pace, however, when she inquired if Mr. Stern's carriage was waiting. There was no carriage waiting, nor was there a cab to be hired.

"There's a milk cart," he suggested. "If you like, I dessay Bill 'ud take you, miss. He's just about startin' for Callow Village."

There being no alternative, with night coming on, she gathered up her dainty skirts and climbed into the milk cart. Her dressing-bag and small portmanteau were deposited among the cans. Her trunk was to be sent on in the morning.

"You're puffickly welcome, miss," the milkman said, with a grin on the broad and purple countenance that comes of intemperance in milk. "The cans is as clean as elber-grease and bilin' water 'll make 'em, an' there's room anuff an' plenty."

She smiled graciously and faced the situation with the spirit of an adventurer. After a few efforts she relapsed into silence and responded to the milkman's conversational attempts with smiles and nods. These were just possible to her amid joltings that jerked the breath violently from her body and seemed at times to threaten broken bones.

"There, now, here y're, miss, safe and sound as ef ye'd kem in yer own carriage," Bill said presently, turning in between the gates of a pretty lodge and bowling up a curved drive. "Will ye get out at the front door or round at the back?"

"Oh, the front door, please."

"Then I'll jest drive yer traps to the back fur convenience' sake," he said, heartily. "Thank'ee, miss, since ye're so kind, but I wasn't lookin' for nothink."

She descended hastily, though with a sense of snobbishness about her haste. After all, a milk cart is in no sense a discreditable affair; on the contrary, it breathes Arcadia and blamelessness. But her world made much of her, and she had grown used to taking herself with dignity. She brushed a few straws from her skirts and shook off the dust. Then she pulled the bell of the large, old-fashioned house. It was now about half-past eight of a June evening. The dusking air was rich with flower scents; the grounds were gay with color. She pulled the bell a second time. She heard its tongue clang through the house a slow, reluctant echo. At last came a sound of feet, an unbolting and unbarring, and the door was opened. She could no longer conceal from herself the fact that she was not expected. An elderly manservant, important and well-mannered, permitted himself to express by one stare that she was a surprise. It occurred to her that the delay in answering the bell had been due to the milkman's delivery of her baggage in the rear of the house, and to some deliberation thereat.

"Mrs. Stern is at home?" she submitted. "I am expected."

"No, ma'am," the man said, decisively, answering apparently both questions at once, and adding: "Mrs. Stern went to London yesterday morning. She expected to be away a week."

"Good gracious!" Dallas exclaimed. "But I wrote. She invited me to visit her. I was to send a line the day before. I am Miss Earle, her cousin."

His manner relaxed. "Will you come in, ma'am?" he said. "Mr. Stern is dining at the vicarage. I will send a message."

"Mr. Stern is here, then?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Heavens! Eliphilet! What a complication!

"Pray don't disturb him," she insisted. "Wait till he returns."

She was shown into a delightful drawing-room with walls of cool, pale green, a rose-red velvet carpet and the most charming old Chippendale chairs and cabinets. But dust lay on everything—the soft twilight did not conceal this, nor did it mask an air of general disorder.

"I will have a room got ready for you," the butler said, respectfully.

"I suppose there is no hotel," she said, in concession to the proprieties that suddenly reared startled heads. For after all, although Eliphilet was Eliphilet, he was Eleanor's husband and a man. The situation was distinctly unconventional. The butler smiled.

"There's an inn at Carbury—a good ten miles away," he said.

After she had been conducted to her room by an untidy, casual parlor-maid, who eyed her boldly, she descended once more to the drawing-room and there sat down to wait for Eliphilet.

"Will you take supper, ma'am?" the butler asked, bringing in a lamp.

"Oh, no, thank you," she responded, hastily, and as hastily regretted it.

She had not taken food since lunch, and now the question had been put it found her distinctly hungry.

At that moment the man, on the

point of closing the door, threw it open again. "Here is Mr. Stern," he said.

His eyes were blue but, to all appearances, neither weak nor in need of spectacles. He wore no straggly beard, but exhibited a firm, clean-shaven chin. He was not handsome, perhaps, but he was eminently good-looking, tall, broad-shouldered, bronzed and healthy. He carried an atmosphere of energy and cheer.

"Nell went up to town yesterday," he said, when she had explained herself, "quite unexpectedly—some woman's rights meeting, or some man's wrong—you know her way. She has a hundred irons in the fire. She will be glad you came. She has been looking forward to your visit. Did they give you some supper?"

He took the situation with so much composure, and as so inevitable, that the proprieties laid down their startled heads, and she confessed that she was hungry.

She was soon sitting before a welcome meal of cold chicken with salad, and of fruit enriched by frothing country cream, served, if the truth must be confessed, in a cheerless, untidy dining-room. She noted a hole in the centre of the tablecloth.

It was out of keeping with the beautiful old glass and silver with which the table was set.

"I suppose Nell has described our *ménage* to you," he said, smiling. "I do all the housekeeping—look after the carpets and things. Sometimes I arrange the flowers." He did not conceal his pride in his accomplishments. "Does it strike you as being ridiculous?" he added, somewhat diffidently.

"Oh, not at all," she answered, hastily. "I suppose that is where the woman's movement, as Eleanor calls it, logically leads."

"Do you approve of the woman's movement?" He glanced at her a trifle ruefully.

"Surely," she said, with a laugh, "when it reduces us women to a proper sense of our shortcomings. We have always waxed proud in the

belief that we were the only persons capable of housekeeping."

She cast a roguish eye adown the untidy table, with its hole in the cloth and its odiously grouped flowers.

"I arranged them," he proclaimed, with the complacency of the amateur. The adept, exerting a natural talent, is but rarely self-conscious. "Yes, I flatter myself I know something of housekeeping," he resumed, "though it's my belief the good housekeeper is born, not made. Nell, of course, has no time to look after domestic things. You should see me in the Spring cleaning season. I try to put method into the work, you know. I keep a notebook and put down which carpet came up last year and need not come up this. It's a great thing, I think, to put method into things."

"You don't take up every carpet every year?" she submitted, with an air of subdued admiration for his methods.

"Lord bless me, no," he said. "I use a little discretion. All carpets don't show the dust alike, and some rooms are used less than others, you know, and the year I don't have up the carpets I have down the curtains."

"I call it an excellent notion," she said, demurely, "to keep a notebook and to put method into housekeeping. Now, do you, or does Eleanor, manage the estate?"

He stared a surprise that was almost aggressive.

"The estate?" he said, tersely. "Oh, I, of course. But that's a mere trifle. I've been used to it all my life."

She was glad he managed the estate and found it simple. Her eyes approved his manly, fine appearance. Beside his apparent capacity for doing his man's business, his shocking and everywhere conspicuous shortcomings in domestic matters seemed of less importance. Though of what possible importance to her was the capacity or incapacity of Cousin Eleanor's Eliphilet? she demanded, with withering contempt, of the person who was presently brushing out her

long hair in the hastily smeared mirror of her ill-kept bedroom.

"I wonder, were I to instruct Jane, the parlormaid, in the arts of turning down and making beds," she reflected, scornfully, "if Eliphilet would have my head removed!"

II

"I've just sent off a line to Eleanor to let her know you're here," he said, cheerfully, as they sat down to breakfast next morning. His face fell suddenly. "By Jove!" he said, "did they bring you tea? I declare, I forgot to tell Jane. We have so few visitors—worse luck—the servants get a bit rusty and need constant reminders."

"Oh, I did not miss it," she professed. "But please don't let me disturb Eleanor and bring her back before she has finished her meetings and lectures. I can easily go home and come again later."

"Go home!" he repeated, with a blank stare. "Why in the name of absurdity should you go home, when you've only just come, and haven't even seen Nell? As to disturbing her, Nell never lets anybody disturb her. She won't think of returning till she has done all she has to do. It won't take her more than a week."

"But is it quite—quite conventional?" she managed to say. "Won't people talk?"

"There is nobody to talk. Our few neighbors have gone to the sea or abroad. And surely your cousin's husband is chaperon enough."

She did not like to insist that her mother and the world would reject him unconditionally in that capacity. She felt almost ashamed in the presence of his open hospitality and honest eyes. And his eyes were so handsomely, so engagingly blue. She thought she had never before seen eyes so blue. She wondered if Eleanor realized what a very delightful person, in his fine manliness, with its touch of boyishness, Eliphilet was.

"Now I call this marmalade," he

said, passing her a somewhat dingy-looking sirup with a proprietary pride; "it is compounded of the best materials and made under my supervision."

Whatsoever he might call it—and Dallas supposed it must be marmalade, as there was orange peel in it—she called it more than one opprobrious name, though her plain duty as guest was to finish her portion with an air of relish.

"Real Seville oranges, I suppose?" she said, in a tone of profound appreciation, feeling called on to say something, and preferring that that something should not outrage her every sense of verity and palate.

"The very best Seville," he said. "I believe in the best, and plenty of it."

It was manifestly true. A wickedly extravagant outlay, with the poorest possible result, was exhibited by the breakfast table. There were half a dozen ill-poached eggs laid carelessly on a dish of bacon sufficient certainly for five persons, while another half-dozen hard-boiled eggs stood near with their dates penciled scrupulously on their shells. Dallas, with a sarcastic view of the system, noticed that two of the eggs had been laid a fortnight before, two the day before and two at intervals between. There were, moreover, dishes containing broiled fish, a cold chicken, a large ham and cutlets.

"Yes, I believe in plenty," Stern said, heartily. "What do you think of the flowers? I was up early and arranged the flowers. By Jove! I've just remembered I forgot to put water in the vases. I must see to that after breakfast. Sometimes I do forget. There are so many things to see to in a house."

There must also have been many things to see to outside the house, but these were obviously seen to in an efficient manner. The stables, the horses, the beautiful grounds, all these displayed the presence of a critical, exacting eye, the control of a firm hand. The men on the place were alert and keen about their duties

as the master went his rounds. He saw everything, a shrub that needed trimming, a broken trellis work or an ill-swept stable, and he issued his injunctions clearly and decisively. It was the same with the estate. The dogcart was brought round, and Dallas drove with him to outlying farms. His eye was everywhere; he showed at his best.

"I suppose you employ a whole shelf of notebooks to reduce this to a system?" she questioned.

"No," he cried, heartily, "not one. It's perfectly simple. I have it at my finger ends."

When she ascended to her room to remove her hat before going in to lunch she was almost ashamed of the amount of admiration Eleanor's husband had been compelling from her since breakfast. "It is so ridiculous," she reflected, "for Eliphalet to be good-looking. And so superfluous," she added, thinking of Eleanor.

However, she was relieved to find herself able to temper her admiration for him by renewed scorn of his household methods. Her room remained as she had left it, the bed unmade, and her bath, with the fine foam of soapy water resulting from the square of yellow soap, which was all his "methods" had supplied for her ablutions, still stood in the middle of the room. With a little ferment of feminine outrage she rang the bell.

"Please bring me some hot water, Jane," she said.

"What! in June, miss?" that candid person retorted, surprised.

"Yes, Jane, in June," she said, with a sufficiently gracious but determined smile. And Jane obeyed.

"I suppose Mr. Stern thinks it hygienic for the beds to air and the rooms to remain like this all the morning," Dallas suggested, sweeping a hand in the direction of the disorder.

"Bless you, miss," Jane answered, cheerfully, "master don't bother. He's never one to fuss. And as long as the bed is made time enough to get into at night, why, he takes it all right." Jane tossed her head. Be-

longing to the sex she did, she perfectly understood what she had been meant to understand. Dallas said no more. She, assuredly, had no right to complain of the ways of the house whose "master" didn't bother.

With his return to the domestic plane Stern once more resumed his exasperating self-complacency.

When Dallas reached the dining-room she found him with a large watering-can leisurely filling the flower vases on the table.

"They forgot to fill them, after all," he said, "though I told John. They look a bit chippy, but they'll revive all right."

She flashed him a withering glance. Who ever heard of flowers reviving after having been left for five or six hours to wilt in a scorching June sun? For the room was like an oven, nobody having had the forethought, or taken the trouble, to draw the blinds.

She incautiously told him she would prefer lemonade to wine, the day being warm. His face beamed.

"It's home-made," he said, springing to the bell. "Indeed, I may say it is made from a recipe of my own."

"Good heavens!" she ejaculated.

"You don't care for it," he said, crestfallen, when she put her glass down.

Was she in truth so pitiful an actress? "Don't care for it!" she repeated, hotly; "why, I never drank lemonade anything like it!"

"I'm so glad," he said, ingenuously. "I can never get Nell to touch it."

"It quenches thirst immediately," she said, demurely. Indeed, a few sips were all-sufficient.

"I've got to drive out some miles," he regretted, after lunch, adding, with a rueful air: "I hope you won't feel dull. I doubt if I can manage to get back much before dinner. You'll find books all over the place."

This was precisely where she did find them—on chairs, under sofas, in vases; everywhere but on their shelves. She nodded him a smiling good-bye. Then she set her lips firmly.

"Now I shall have a field afternoon," she said. She rang for John.

"Those flowers will never revive, I fear," she told him. "If you will throw them all away, please, and bring me the glasses filled with water, I will put in fresh flowers."

With a large basket on her arm, a pair of scissors in hand and a gleam of decision in her eyes she descended on the garden. An hour later she sat, well pleased, before a tableful of charmingly arranged vases.

"Well, I will say, ma'am," John submitted, admiringly, "you have got an eye for groupin'."

Having placed the vases to her satisfaction, and having indignantly removed some carefully scalloped sheets of foolscap from the dusty grates of drawing-room and dining-room, she set in their places pots of fern and moss she had coaxed from the gardener.

"They conceal a multitude of dust," she said, with a distasteful *move*, "but perhaps before I leave I shall muster courage to set Jane at them with a broom." She carefully ranged the scattered books on the shelves she took to be their proper places. After which she slipped up to her bedroom and tore up an old dressing-jacket into dusters.

With these she hurried down stairs again, and with her ears alert for footsteps, set about dusting and rubbing and polishing the drawing-room cabinets and chairs.

"What *would* mother say?" she wondered, smiling. "I can hear her tell Lady Carpenders—in fact, since Reginald engaged himself to Molly Smith, without first asking me, she's always telling her—'Dallas is *so* undomesticated! I often wonder what she is fitted for.' One would need to be as undomesticated as mother condemns me for being to stand this kind of thing." She waved a grubby hand around the room. Her face was grim and more or less begrimed. Dark rings, of neither kohl nor beauty but merely dust, surrounded her eyes. She was so engrossed she forgot to listen for Jane. Looking up

suddenly she found Stern, with a petrified countenance, standing in the middle of the room, observing her.

"God bless me!" he ejaculated.

She was a self-possessed young woman. Possibly if she had realized what a very dirty face she lifted she would not have been quite so cool.

"I forgot to ask permission to rub your furniture, Mr. Stern," she fibbed, meekly. "I do hope you will not mind. The doctor ordered it as exercise. You have no notion what excellent exercise rubbing furniture is. He said it uses muscles that otherwise would positively never be used."

He remained a moment silent. He looked serious. His eyes were inscrutable. Under his mustache there may have been anger or there may have been a smile. Men who desire to conceal their character or feelings have much to be grateful for when nature supplies them with mustaches.

"The furniture is quite at your disposal," he returned; "but in hot weather like this, don't you think you might forego such violent exercise?"

"Perhaps I might," she said, with a somewhat exhausted sigh. She had been so keen on her task she had not realized how very tired she was. She rose. She walked to the window and shook out her duster like an experienced housemaid. A volume of flocculent dust beclouded the air. It was impossible to keep in a sneeze.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated, marking the dust cloud with a disgusted eye. He likewise was compelled to sneeze. "I never saw such a thing!" he added, after a minute. "It is really very good of you," he said, with sudden abasement. He was like a person with triumphant castles tumbled all about him. She was quite distressed for his illusions.

"Good of me!" she returned. "Indeed, it is the purest selfishness. One should not leave muscles unused."

"Why, of course not," he said. "But hadn't you better rest now? You look frightfully hot and tired. Tea will be up in half an hour, and I looked in to ask you to give me some tea."

He took the duster from her hand with meek masterfulness.

"Don't let Jane see it," she appealed.

His blue eyes gleamed. "Jane sha'n't see it," he promised.

III

WHEN she descended presently for tea her face was clean, her hair rearranged, and she wore a fresh and pretty dress of muslin. He was sitting in a corner, still with an aspect of humility, his face soberly reflective.

"It was kind of you to do the flowers," he said; "they're ripping. I see now how they should look."

"I just love arranging flowers," she said (Mrs. Earle had told Lady Carpenders a very different tale) "and please forgive me for interfering with the fireplaces. Do you know, I have the most absurdly shocking temper. And when I see scalloped foolscap in grates—nice, clean, perfectly scalloped foolscap even in nice, clean grates—I feel absolutely murderous. It's a sort of mania of mine. I just have to put ferns or something in its place."

"The ferns look fine," he said; "wonder we never thought of them."

"There are so many things to see to in a house," she consoled him, repeating the formula he had used with so much pride.

There was little pride about him now. Even his collar seemed to have lost starch.

At the end of the week Cousin Eleanor returned. She was a sturdy, handsome, albeit a somewhat masculine-looking person, with gray hair and spectacles. She wore a divided skirt, merely for conscience's sake. To the onlooker and in point of voluminousness it was as other skirts, but she had the elation of knowing it to be divided. She strode like a man and laughed in a bass voice. "She is years older than he," was Dallas's first thought. She gave her guest a cordial welcome. She bestowed a

strong, warm hand and an affectionate glance on Stern.

"Good gracious! why doesn't she kiss him?" Dallas reflected, indignantly; "after being away from him a whole week, too!"

Yet she was fiercely glad that Eleanor did not kiss him. At the same time she was frightened, and sat a-tremble, suddenly realizing how glad she was that Eleanor did not kiss him.

"Well, how have you two been getting on? Conventionally, of course, it has been a most disgraceful scandal. But Phil's such a very safe, domesticated person."

"So she does call him Phil," Dallas said, under her breath. Then she was angry that Eleanor called him Phil, despite the fact that she had herself devised the name for him, and had meant to suggest it to Eleanor, to ensure her agreeing better with him.

"My dear Dallas," Eleanor protested, in her deep voice, "what a pity you've become a beauty! I'm afraid you'll never do anything now."

"I'm not a beauty!" Dallas snapped, merely for the pleasure of contradicting Eleanor. For all at once she hated Eleanor. Why had Eleanor come to disturb them? Theirs had been a week of perfect happiness.

"You look very much like one," Eleanor retorted, good-humoredly. Then she lowered her voice in a question to Stern.

"Oh, he's all right," Stern answered. They walked to the window in conversation.

Dallas sat watching them with wicked eyes, her fingers twisting fiercely. Perhaps, after all, they would kiss. Perhaps when she left the room they would kiss. But she would not leave the room. No! she would sit there till doomsday rather than leave them together. It would be so ridiculous for Eleanor to kiss him, for him to— She pulled up her thoughts with a little shiver. She decided to go home. As soon as she could with civility she would pack her trunks. She experienced a sudden

sick longing for home, for change and for a whirl of swift routine that should sweep away thought.

Eleanor did not notice the ferns nor the flowers nor the unwonted lack of dust.

"Phil's a very tolerable house-keeper," she informed her guest, "and I'm glad enough to leave it all to him. Work is so absorbing, and if he, like a dear, good fellow, didn't go in for domesticity, heaven only knows what I should do."

That same evening Dallas received a shock—a shock wherein indignation and a species of ecstasy mingled as smoke mingles with flame. For as they sat in the delicious, rose-perfumed coolness of the garden, Eleanor having withdrawn to write a letter—she was forever writing letters—Stern suddenly moved his chair up to her, and with a smile and a deep-drawn breath looked into her eyes.

"We were very happy keeping house together, you and I," he said.

"Oh, quite comfortable," she retorted, stiffly. "You really are such a superb manager!"

"Oh, well," he said, good-humoredly, "you have rather dispelled some illusions of mine. You've even deserted my marmalade and lemonade."

"Sometimes civility costs *too* much."

"I shall be able to see more of you now," he said, with an ardent note in his voice. "I've been doing all my work this last week in order to be free. Nell won't trouble us. She seldom shows up except at meals."

His manner said more than his words. She could have whipped herself for the tremor its sweet flattery afforded her. She had liked him for his frank and manly ingenuousness.

"I mean to help Eleanor with her work," she said, steadying her eyes to meet his. She was pleased to see him duly snubbed. He shrugged his shoulders, and as Eleanor just then sounded her return by talking loudly to her dogs, he moved his chair away and assumed an impersonal air. As Eleanor's stout, sturdy frame came

striding over the lawn, in one of her hands a sheaf of letters, in the other a Parliamentary blue book, Dallas could not repress a spasm of compassion for him.

"It was wicked of her to marry him," she reflected, vehemently. "She cannot know what love is; and how could she expect any man to love her?"

Perhaps Eleanor noticed more than she was given credit for. She swept an observant glance over them. "Now I won't have any love-making between you two," she said, calmly; "Phil has got to be content with me."

"Oh, love-making!" he repeated, airily—"Contemptuously," Dallas reflected, "as if love-making were a mere customary trifle." Yet he had the decency to flush. She stiffened angrily against him. After all he had pretended. Was he nothing more than a mere flirt—a married flirt? He had made her fond of him by chivalrous, irreproachable conduct under trying circumstances. Was it possible he would now attempt to draw her into a flirtation!—and what more odious and underbred than a man-flirt!

"Why do you avoid me?" he protested once. "Why have you changed?" Oh, how could eyes appear so trusty when the man behind them could be treacherous!

"Changed?" she repeated. "Good gracious, Mr. Stern, am I a person so limited as to have only one mood?"

"You were kind to me till Nell came," he said, in a low, intense voice.

"A man has no right to expect more than one woman to be kind to him," she fenced, coldly.

He strode up suddenly to her. There was an air of mastery about him. "Do you mean Nell?" he said, eagerly. "Are you jealous of Nell? After all, you know Nell's nothing—but Nell."

"So I suppose," she rejoined, frigidly. She suddenly rose, workbag in hand. "Now I really must go in and get some mending cotton."

She walked with dignified com-

posure so long as she was within his range. Beyond it, she took to her heels and ran to her room, where she wept for a passionate hour. How could she love this faithless, contemptible Eliphalet! And yet she did love him.

"Have you been crying?" he said, softly, following her to the drawing-room after lunch. Eleanor, having talked them off their heads with blue books and statistics all lunch time, had retreated once more to her study.

"Suppose I have been crying?" she retorted, flashing challenging eyes at him.

"In that case I am sorry," he said, with a propitiatory smile. He stood before her with bent head, his aspect tender and protective. Could treachery be so alluring?

"I enjoy crying," she insisted, savagely.

He moved a pace nearer. He shook his head.

"No," he said, "that isn't your temperament." Suddenly he sat down by her and took one of her hands in a firm, warm grip. Tears having come to the surface, lingered there. They broke out afresh. Her shoulders shook with vehement weeping. In a moment she was drawn into strong and tender arms. He kissed her gently. She wrenched herself away. She stood to her height with flaming eyes.

"Oh, how dare you—how dare you!" she cried, fiercely. "How dare you touch me!"

She darted through the long French windows into the garden. She mopped her eyes angrily, not noticing where she went. She found herself soon in a part of the grounds unknown to her. In her distress of mind she wandered on. What a miserable, miserable girl she was! She would pack at once and leave for home next day. Any fib would do. Somebody ill—a dinner she could not escape—anything but the truth. Realizing the whole truth, she was overborne with shame. For she knew that the greatest pain her life had known would be at leaving her cousin's husband.

She sat down suddenly on a bench and gave way once more to tears. She turned at a sound. Had he pursued her here? A man in a wheeled chair sat a few yards distant, regarding her with astonishment. Something in the pale and peevish face and in the blueness of the eyes arrested her.

"You seem distressed," he said.

"Oh, not at all," she returned, mopping away her tears.

"You may *not* be distressed," he insisted, querulously. "All I said was that you *seem* distressed."

"Well, it is all over now," she asserted, smiling with tremulous lips.

"Are you stopping here?" he asked. He moved a hand in the direction of the house.

"Yes," she said. "Are you?"

He showed surprise. "I live here," he said. "I'm Eliphilet Stern."

"You are . . . : ?"

"Eliphilet Stern," he said. "I keep to my own rooms. I am a wretched invalid. I've just had a bad week. I suppose you are Dallas Earle, Nell's cousin. Phil told me you were here."

"Good gracious!" she gasped. She sat breathing quickly. Her blood was beating in her ears. After a minute she achieved a laugh. "Do tell me," she said. "I have been a little puzzled as to Phil's relationship."

"Why, it isn't very complicated," he rejoined. "Philip is my young-

er brother—Eleanor's brother-in-law and factotum."

"Good gracious!" she gasped again. After a minute she rose. She slipped a warm hand into the invalid's chill one. She could have kissed him for his information. "I shall come and sit with you often," she said, "if I may."

He smiled a faint assent.

She returned to the house with a firm step, though her heart was quaking. She was not going to pack; what she was going to do was far more difficult. She found him in the drawing-room, sitting as she had left him. But his head was bowed dejectedly between his hands. He heard her enter, but he did not look up; he seemed almost too depressed to care.

She sat down quietly beside him. After a moment she laid her cheek softly against his sleeve. He sighed.

"You are a very inexplicable person," he said, dully. "I can't help loving you, although I don't profess to understand you."

"Don't try," she whispered. "I have such horrid moods. People who know me just make the best of my nice ones."

He did not need twice telling.

Eleanor was very angry. "In the name of all that's aggravating," she protested, "who will do the house-keeping?"

28

AUT OMNIA AUT NIHIL

WEALTH laid her gold within his grasp,
Fame brought her laurels rare;
His, Fortune's hand to touch and clasp,
His, smiles of women fair.

Yet restless still, dissatisfied,
He feels the old-time thrall
Of one dear love to him denied,
And lacking this, lacks all.

ELEANORE S. INSLEE.

A MAN TO ORDER

By Kate Masterson

HALLWAY of a country club, with logs blazing on a hearth. View of room beyond, with men in bright-colored golf and riding togs, drinking tea poured by pretty women. There is the music of laughter and the clink of cups. The ripple of an accompaniment sounds from a piano somewhere, and the conversation becomes animated.

Van Broiler and Cheerfullyer enter the hall from outside and greet each other, and stand a moment conversing as they remove their gloves.

CHEERFULLYER—Same old crowd, eh? Nothing new?

VAN BROILER—Well, I should say there is! Dimpleton's sister is on from Baltimore. I played tennis with her all morning. She plays a ripping game.

CHEERFULLYER—A looker?

VAN BROILER—She's a dream, old man! Not a bit like the others! Won't flirt; doesn't waltz!

CHEERFULLYER—Oh! I say!

VAN BROILER—I tell you I was with her till luncheon, and we talked all the way. I drove her home. She's got noble ideals and all that. Says she likes Richard Harding Davis men!

CHEERFULLYER—No!

VAN BROILER—That's right! She's odd. Wouldn't bet on the game. But she's lovely! (Sighs.) Like one of the girls you read about.

CHEERFULLYER—Can you point her out from here?

VAN BROILER—Don't seem to rubber! See that beautiful, Titian-haired girl in gray Swiss—

CHEERFULLYER (*alarmed*)—Swiss!

VAN BROILER—Well, whatever it is

—with the violets. Isn't she simply lovely?

CHEERFULLYER—Say, old man, present me, will you?

VAN BROILER—It's no use! You can't jolly her! I've an engagement with her in the library at five. I am going to show her some of the old prints. She's interested in that sort of thing.

CHEERFULLYER—It's only a little after four now. Take me over; that's a good fellow.

They enter. Cheerfullyer is presented. Soon after he strolls out in the hall with Miss Dimpleton. He finds her a comfortable corner on the stairs and sits on the step below, with his elbow resting on his knee, and looks up at her like a man in an illustrated society paper. He says:

“Music is such a cheerful background for conversation. I wonder why it is? The moment it begins we all think of something to say.”

“It's the opera gets us in that way of it, I fancy. It would seem rather funny if people really listened to the music, wouldn't it?”

“It would seem unusual—and serious.”

“I think it's more interesting to be stupid, don't you?”

“It is always a mistake for a girl to be serious.”

“Have you had some tea?”

“No; Scotch-and-soda. I've been playing golf.”

“Is it a part of the game?”

“Well, I can't stand for tea and bouillon. They get on a fellow's nerves.”

“I never knew men had nerves.”

“I hadn't, once!”

"Ha, ha, ha! You talk as if you were—well—at least forty, when really—let me see—you are about twenty-five?"

"That's good! Twenty-five! Why, I'm twenty-nine."

"Really? I might have known! Men are never asked out until they are past twenty-five! They are apt to be football men and knock over china in drawing-rooms."

"Don't you like football heroes?"

"Oh, dear me! I'm past that! But I have my ideal!"

"Look anything like me?"

"Oh, there is no romance about men nowadays! I like the chaps in the historical novels who carried swords and went about rescuing people, like—like—"

"I know; like *Don Cæsar de Bazan!*"

"Like real heroes! But a man must have *lived* before he is brave enough for that! Sometimes I think there are no modern heroes."

"I don't see why a man shouldn't be as noble in a raglan as in those party cloaks they used to wear in the old days."

"Are you really twenty-nine?"

"Um."

"That is not so very old, though."

"You can't count age by years in these times! In nine years a man learns much of the world—the other side."

"Have you been over?"

"I didn't quite mean that, but I went abroad right after college. I let nothing get by me. I lived in Paris—"

"Yes?"

"The Latin Quarter, you know—grisettes and—"

"Oh!"

"Learned to drink absinthe by the bucket—"

"U—gh—h—h!"

"Gambled at Monte Carlo until I hadn't a red."

"How dreadful!"

"Oh, everyone has to go through that. I went out one night with a revolver in my pocket—going to make an end of it. A queer thing happened.

I came to a little bit of a dinky greenhouse looking over the water. The yachts lay about, some of them lighted up gaily—parties going on, you know—and music sounding over the waves; but it didn't seem to hit me much. I was tired. Didn't want to play any more. I put my hand on the smooth little pistol and slid it into my palm, and just then—"

"Yes—yes?"

"I heard a groan, and a man sort of staggered beside me with another gun in his hand and put it to his head. Then it struck me as funny that there should be a brace of us there at the same time, and I knocked his pistol out of his hand. It went off in the air, and the man broke down and told how he'd been losing everything—his wife's jewels, even—and I gave him a great talk about bracing up in a crisis of that kind; talked to him like an elder brother, and the result was we both left the place next morning, resolved never to touch a game again."

"How perfectly lovely of you!"

"It was only a chance, you know. Another minute and there would have been a double funeral."

"What a dreadful place it is! I must go there when I go abroad."

"Don't, please."

"Why?"

"It's no place for a nice girl like you. It's too hot. Stick to the cathedrals and the lakes and the ruins."

"But I like adventure. If I had been a man I should have gone about looking for—for—"

"Trouble?"

"No; dangers, war, stirring scenes like those in the plays when the lights are lowered and the music gets shivery."

"They aren't a bit like the real thing! Now, things always happen quietly in life—have you ever noticed? Sometimes the most important things are kept quiet on purpose. There are few climaxes. There was a fellow once who wrote plays, who said the Bible didn't show the proper literary construction. He thought it should have ended with the Flood."

"How ridiculous!"

"Yes, wasn't it? Now, when I was in Constantinople I was nearly killed in the most dramatic style. But there was no red light about it. You see, just for a lark, I got into the harem—"

"You did!"

"Oh, it's nothing to get in. The fine work is getting out. I had heard there was an American girl in there who had been carried off by force, and I fancied it was about up to me to find out about it. I disguised myself as a perfume seller—a woman, you know. Tibetts used to help me make up for amateur theatricals, and he turned me out a dreamy-eyed Oriental. I laid in a stock of pastes and powders and incense and things, and I got into the sacred inner temple."

"Oh, do tell me about it! How perfectly exciting!"

"Well—er—I couldn't exactly tell you about it. You see, in the first place, I just got away with my life, and—sh—h—did you imagine you heard anything? They say they follow a fellow all over the earth, after a thing like that, looking for vengeance. But the little American girl got home all right."

"Glorious, wasn't it?"

"Oh, it's nothing to cowboy life on the plains. There you get real excitement—the atmosphere fairly tingles with it! I came home from the Continent weary of civilization and its confining trammels. I wanted the broad, free life of the prairies. And I got it! When I came back to the Avenue and the clubs I was no longer a cub. I knew my world. Of course, I've lost a great deal—the hopes and beliefs and illusions—"

"Oh, don't say that!"

"I'm not the sort of man a girl would care about. I've knocked about too much! I'm out of the tea and bouillon class. I know how to buy violets, but I don't pretend to under-

stand girls. Only, when I really like one, I know enough to keep still about my record! Until I met you I never thought I should speak as I have to-night! I'm in the mire, I know. But my eyes are on the stars."

"Oh, oh, you mustn't talk like that! All you need is a helping hand to show you the right way. Oh, dear! there's Mr. Van Broiler coming for me! What a bore!"

"Don't go! What's the use?"

"But I promised to look at prints in the library. They are very interesting, he says."

"Oh, very well!"

"Do you care, really?"

"Do you think I would talk as I have to you if I didn't care? Why, I've told you the story of my life. I've kept nothing back. But go—go with your Van Broiler. He's making faces down there at the foot of the stairs."

"But I really don't care to. He's very tiresome. I met him this morning in the court. He teaches Sunday-school. Just fancy!"

"Ha, ha! I have it!"

"What?"

"Ask me to go along."

"Well?"

"You don't really care for prints, do you?"

"Not—just now! Sh—h! He's coming up!"

"Going to be at the dance tonight?"

"Why—yes—I—"

"Say you'll give me all the waltzes."

"But I don't waltz."

"That's just it—neither do I! But they have a dandy palm-room. Are you fond of cacti?"

"Very well, all the waltzes— Oh, Mr. Van Broiler, I've been waiting for you! Mr. Cheerfullyer is coming with us to look at the prints. I hope you've managed to get some tea."



LAURA AND COMPANY

LAURA cooed like a dove then—
 Now she's always so cross;
 She was ruled just by Love then—
 Love no longer is "boss."

She avoided all strife then—
 Now she's developed "a will;"
 She was joyous with life then—
 Now she's always "so ill."

She was so full of mirth then—
 Now she's wearied by mirth;
 Laura's wants were so few then—
 Now she wants the whole earth.

She was so fond of a kiss then—
 Now she's just sick of kisses.
 She was only a Miss then—
 Laura now is a Mrs.

JAMES ROWE.



PHYSICALLY FITTED

B'JONES—The Fat Lady evidently prefers the Living Skeleton to any other man.

B'JINKS—Why?

B'JONES—She says he'll make a rattling husband.



THE NEW WOMAN

ICANNOT sew on a machine,
 It breaks my back to work the treadle,
 And so instead I ride my wheel—
 It's such good exercise to pedal.

And as for dusting, oh, dear me!
 Standing just wears my strength away,
 And so I gather up my clubs
 And go out and play golf all day.

ELIZABETH HARMAN.

LA CENDRE D'AMOUR

THE Man and the Woman sat staring moodily into the fast dying fire. About them were glitter and comfort, but on their faces discontent had set its seal.

"Well, it's ended; we thought it would last forever," remarked the Man, in a hopeless tone. "That was three months ago." The Woman's lovely lips curved in an incredulous, sarcastic, pitiful smile. "When I kissed you just now—" continued the Man.

The Woman interrupted him with a gesture and the words: "Yes, I know. It was a failure. The thrill is gone. It has grown to be a habit."

There was silence for a few moments. The falling of charred log, the ticking of the gilded clock, sounded painfully loud.

"Do you remember how everyone smiled when we said our honeymoon would last for a year—two years? Well, I am ready to go back to the world now." The Woman sighed wearily.

The Man's eyes flashed with recollection and rested on the Woman with some of the old tenderness.

"I suppose there will be moments—I had one then—when you will bewitch me as you did—before," he said. "You remember that dark, windy, eerie day when we came in chilled with skating, and you stood shivering before the fire? I longed to take you in my arms and to hold you against my heart till you were warm. I wanted to kiss you—your lips, your cheeks—"

"Yes, I remember. I know I wished that at least you would take my hands in yours. Now you'd suggest a chair before the fire and wrap me in—a rug."

Into the Man's eyes had entered a haze of dreamy retrospection. "Those

days out West," he said, slowly, "when I went there for my health, I used to lie looking up at the stars, thinking of you, longing madly for you. I thought eternity not long enough then—"

"Your letters—how I watched for them!" said the Woman, falling into his mood. "When the postman went by—well, I cried once, and you know I am not given to tears. I felt that if I were only with you, out there in God's country, life could hold no greater bliss."

"We are in God's country," said the Man.

There was a pained expression in both the blue eyes and the brown now. Their voices were hushed, as the voices of those who stand beside a funeral bier.

"I kissed your pictured face the last thing before I slept," he said.

"You forget sometimes, now, to kiss the real one. Oh, I don't mind. Sentiment doesn't belong in practical, everyday life," the Woman replied, with a dreary little laugh. "In those old days Madge Lester told me it wouldn't last—that it couldn't. I laughed. I told her that at any rate I preferred to 'let the old cat die' with you."

"After all," the Man said, "I should always have been miserable had we not tried—the experiment."

And the Woman added, "I'm sure I'm glad I chose you rather than any of the other possibilities."

"Then those first glad days when you were mine, wholly and entirely mine."

"They were Paradise on earth. And we ran hand in hand through the glowing October woods, rustling the crisp leaves as we went, so glad, so glad to be together." The Woman's eyes had filled with tears. She went

to the window and looked through a blinding mist out into the sunset that was flushing the cold sky with tints of orange and rose and gold. When she walked back into the circle of fire-shine, and sank gracefully into the embrace of the huge armchair, all trace of emotion was banished from her face.

"Well, it's ended," she repeated, in calm, even tones. "And at least we give the world, our world, the satisfaction of saying, 'I told you so.'"

There was no trace of mirth in the Man's rather nervous laugh. "Whittier should have written it :

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest of all are 'What has been.'"

He leaned forward and looked earnestly into the serene dark eyes. "Maizie, do you think *Romeo* and *Juliet* would have used dagger and poi-

son if they had not been separated until after three months together?"

"No, I don't," was her honest answer. "After all, what are we mourning about? We're good companions, jolly comrades, as you said yesterday. We were old enough to know that the first bewildering intoxication of love could not last forever. Think—it would be tiresome, and it wouldn't chime well with advancing age."

"At least, we shall never bore one another. We are too understanding for that." The Man stretched out his strong brown hand, and the Woman laid her delicate white one confidingly in it. And thus they sat in silence, while the crimson of the coals disappeared beneath a coat of ashy gray, and the vivid tints of the western sky paled into tints of pearl.

R. S. PHILLIPS.



USUALLY COINCIDENT

SHE—Beauty and wealth seldom go together.

HE—Oh, I don't know. I've always understood that a girl loses her beauty when she loses her money.



NOT CONSISTENT

BIBBS—Mrs. Doublets has presented her husband with twins.

GIBBS—The idea! And that woman said she married Doublets to reform him!



HE STILL LIVES

SHE—Ida has been married to old Mr. Moneybags ten years.

HE—Is she in love with him?

"Not yet."

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THE MIDDLE COURSE

By Mrs. Poultney Bigelow

Let a wife try—I do not say till seven times, but even to seventy times seven—to give her best to her husband, and get from him something that corresponds to it. Let her do that; but if, after all her endeavors, he not only refuses to give what her spirit asks of him, but to receive and acknowledge what it offers him, then is it not a mere senseless tyranny to ordain that things which one man has rejected as worth nothing she may not offer to another, to whom they would, perhaps, be everything?

Some of the women who, finding no love in marriage, have by the need of their nature been driven to seek it somewhere, are the women who, if married happily, would have been most passionately faithful to their husbands.—*W. H. Mallock, "A Human Document."*

MANY dramas, both tragedies and comedies, begin at a dinner table, though they seldom end there, unless one of the principal actors be choked by a fish bone or die of a "surfeit," like one of England's early kings.

There was, however, no hint of anything dramatic at the hospitable board of Mrs. Bertram Vincent on a certain evening in early June. The light of the candles fell pinkly on eight well-contented, gently pleased faces; four women and four men sat eating an exquisite meal and absorbing unconsciously the beauty of the scarlet and pink Shirley poppies, of the convolutions of rosy silk and of the unique pieces of silver that enhanced the purity of their spotless damask background. It was a gathering very representative of a certain section of London society—a most interesting section, some people would say—where bohemians have retained certain gay and attractive qualities and have added thereto a high degree of moral rectitude—and clean shirts. There were, besides the host and hostess, an actor and his wife, an American married couple living in London, a well-known sculptor and a lovely young woman

who was, for the first time since her marriage, dining out deprived of the protection of her adoring husband. The last, Mrs. Mellor, was the living incarnation of the smooth, delicately tinted beauties of a Christmas supplement, and to judge from her conversation, had as little mental depth as the supplement has material thickness.

She found herself not only unprotected by her Charles, who was out of town for a day or two, but next to an actor, and the unusualness of the situation made her heart flutter and her color deepen. But the flutter was that of a mechanical canary bird and the blush was produced by trepidation, not by any pleasurable emotion.

The actor was thinking that it was easier to play a double rôle for a hundred consecutive nights than to strike a conversational spark from this unpromising material. His only recompense for the attempt was a super-excellent lobster cutlet, which he addressed with more satisfactory results.

Mrs. Oliver North, the American, sat beside Clement Moorlake, the sculptor. This was their first meeting, though they had many friends in common. Mrs. North had, of course,

heard of him very often and had seen several of his statues. She could not help thinking, as she now looked at him, that he was infinitely more interesting than any of his creations. His was the face of a man who has early found that life, lived in its fulness, means suffering. There was nothing, so far, in his conversation or his manner to imply that he had sad or secret memories, yet such was the impression at once produced on the mind of his new acquaintance. There was a certain quality in his beauty, his manner, his general bearing which can only be described as romantic. Women were often at once touched by it, and it sometimes led them to expect developments that would justify their estimate, though these expectations were doomed to remain unrealized.

In thinking of persons who are absent and trying to recall their personality, we are apt to remember vividly some one salient feature. In after days Althea, when conjuring up Moorlake's face, always saw his eyes. They were very remarkable—penetrating yet soft, keen yet kindly, brilliant yet tender. Their color was a dark hazel, which in some lights appeared brown, because of the blackness of the lashes. For the rest Althea thought that had *Romeo* lived to conquer his sorrow, he might, at forty, have been externally just such a man as Clement Moorlake.

Althea herself was barely thirty. She was a woman who, after eight years of a married life that left much of her nature unsatisfied, was reaching out always for a consoling sympathy, which she seldom found, or found only to reject, because the coarseness of man's nature is prone to misinterpret such spiritual yearnings. Such a woman is dangerous—often to others and always to herself.

Moorlake already found her charming. He who created only in colorless stone could nevertheless appreciate the tinted whiteness of arms and shoulders that he would not have disdained to model.

Conversation just then was of the

placid and agreeable kind that promotes digestion. No agitating party questions were ever allowed at the Vincent table. The Vincents did not "go in" for politics, though they had intimate friends on both sides. Vincent was a violent Radical, he always said, yet no one could associate this characterization with his benign expression and slow, lazy utterance.

"Not only are Vincent's dinners irreproachable," a well-known diner-out had once said, "but they always agree with me, because they are accompanied by the sauce of good humor."

In a pause of the general conversation Mrs. Vincent's voice was heard.

"I learned such a good definition of a wife the other day," she said. "Effie Nixon said, in her sharp way: 'I don't want to marry! What is a wife, anyway? Only an upper servant engaged by the lifetime without wages.'"

North laughed a little.

"Are you sure," said he, "that it was not my wife who said that? I believe that's her view."

Moorlake glanced at Althea. Her lips compressed slightly.

"Do you remember," said Banfrey, the actor, eager to divert the conversation, "a pretty little American woman named Escott?" He addressed Mrs. Vincent more particularly.

"Yes," answered that lady. "A gay, pleasant creature. What about her?"

"Since she has returned home her husband is suing a man in New York for alienating her affections. The man has had to mortgage his house in order to pay."

"What a revolting thing!" exclaimed Mrs. North, "to put a money value on a woman's affections."

"Far better," said North, sharply, "to put a bullet into the man."

"My dear Oliver," protested Vincent, lazily; "how drastic!"

"In my opinion that is the only way to deal with such a scoundrel," answered North, quite seriously.

Althea's cheek burned. She turned to Moorlake. "Isn't that an awful

idea," she said, "to guard a woman's faith with a revolver?"

"Unnecessarily stern, perhaps," he said, smiling. "There are pleasanter ways of keeping a wife's love."

Althea looked straight at her husband.

"What if Mrs. Escott *wanted* to have her affections alienated?" she demanded, with more earnestness than the occasion seemed to warrant.

"Then she ought to be shot, too," said North, imperturbably.

Mrs. Mellor looked pained.

"What a horrid subject!" she murmured to Banfrey, without, however, expecting his sympathy. She had a fixed idea that all actors are immoral.

The Vincents regarded Mrs. North with interest.

"Let us have your opinion, dear lady," said Bertram. "It is sure to be worth hearing."

Althea's cheeks were very red, and she held her head very high.

"I think," she said, deliberately, "that the only man who is answerable for alienating a married woman's affections is her own husband."

There was an uncomfortable silence.

"That is a dark saying," observed Vincent, presently, "but I suppose it means something."

"I see!" said Mrs. Banfrey. "It means that you can't pour water into a full jug!"

"A full jug meaning a heart full of love," said Mrs. Vincent. "I understand. Women can love only one man at a time, and the husband has only to see that *he* is that man."

"You have been happy in choosing your women friends," said Banfrey, cynically, "if that's the only kind you know."

"Oh, actors see the *seamy* side," said Nellie Vincent, lightly. "No one minds what they say."

"I wish Charlie were here!" murmured the bride to herself.

North looked very angry.

"Why did you start all this?" he asked of his wife, with an absence of courtesy which made Moorlake indignant.

"As a warning to husbands!" said Althea, with an attempt at lightness.

North turned to his neighbor with some rather irrelevant remark.

Under cover of the general conversation that now began Althea spoke to Moorlake.

"You understand what I mean, don't you?" she asked, almost appealingly.

"I think I do; and I quite agree with you," he answered.

Just then Mrs. Vincent made a sign to Mrs. Banfrey, and the women left the room.

II

"COME up stairs to the studio," said the hostess. "I want you to see Bertie's picture. I like it amazingly, though perhaps I'm rather prejudiced." She laughed lightly as she stood on the shallow step, waiting for her friends to precede her.

"You know I gave him the subject," said Mrs. North.

"I know you did; it's a good idea, and one that wouldn't have occurred to Bertie. He isn't given to ghostly things."

The studio was a room about thirty feet square, in which Vincent painted, composed, etched, sang, and did a few other things. He considered himself only an amateur at these various pursuits, for he asserted that no man can espouse any one art if he coquette with all the others.

"Don't show the picture till Mr. Vincent comes up," said Mrs. Mellor, with timid sweetness.

"Very well," said Mrs. Vincent, and as she spoke she deftly wheeled the easel round so that the picture was hidden.

"Now, my dear, come and sit by me. I haven't seen you for a blue moon," and she took Althea's hand, leading her to a small sofa.

The other two women, forced into friendly relations by this maneuver, sat down beside a fire of vari-colored driftwood.

The appearance of coffee and li-

queurs put the finishing touch to the sense of well-being which should belong to the after-dinner hour.

"Tell me, Althea," pursued Nellie Vincent, "why so severe on husbands? Has Oliver been alienating your affections?"

"He has been . . . as usual."

"No lucid intervals?"

"Short—very short. I am desperate! If it were not for the child I should leave it all."

"Ah, the child! Children are the rivets in the matrimonial chain. They hold the wretched parents together. I thought you very bitter at dinner. I saw the beloved Moorlake look at you with interest. By the way, did he impress you?"

"Of course. He must impress everyone."

"But not always pleasantly. Some people hate him."

"No doubt—vain women and unattractive men. He would make both feel uncomfortable."

"You know that coarse creature, Winterham? He calls Moorlake all sorts of names. He says he's a prig—looks like 'something sugar-coated made up by the chemist.'"

"Tell him I wish he would give me the address of that chemist!"

"Althea, you alarm me!"

"No, my dear, you need not be afraid. Where have you kept this rare creature all these years, that you produce him only now?"

"He has kept himself in Italy."

"He looks a little Italian, though not so black as some. I hate black men! What is his history?"

"Why do you think he has one?"

"Because he's unmarried. All bachelors have a history."

"And some married men! Yes, we think he has one, but I won't tell you about him; it will make him too interesting."

"Providence has made him that already."

At that moment a lady entered the room, the maid, a little in advance, announcing, "Mrs. Hilyer."

The newcomer was small and slight, with dark, curly hair and deep

blue eyes. She wore over an amber satin gown a long white cloak trimmed with feathers.

"I'm aware that this is without precedent!" she exclaimed—if a remark uttered in such a low, sweet voice could be called an exclamation—"but I'm on my way to a neighbor of yours, and I wanted to remind you of to-morrow. Had you forgotten?"

She addressed Mrs. Vincent, and kissed her on both cheeks as soon as she had finished speaking.

"Bother my neighbor!" said Nellie, cordially. "Take off this delicious, fluffy garment and spend an hour with us. The men will be up in a minute. Clement Moorlake is here."

"Do you think I require that as an inducement?" demanded Mrs. Hilyer, with soft reproachfulness. "I can't stay. My carriage is here."

"Send it away, then. Bertram will take you over to the Bascombes'. It's just across the street."

"Very well. You always seduce me from the path of duty—" allowing the maid to divest her of the cloak. "Tell my man to come back—to the house opposite—at one o'clock."

Then she turned to Althea. "How rude I have been! I did not recognize you at once. I'm rather blind. How are you?"

Althea responded pleasantly. She knew Mrs. Hilyer very little, but thought her interesting. The new arrival then found that she also knew both the ladies by the fire, and went over to speak to them.

"What! a fire in June, Nellie?"

"It looks pretty, and the evenings are cold," said Mrs. Banfrey.

"Yes," hazarded the lovely Mrs. Mellor; "there was a slight frost last night."

These profound observations were interrupted by the entrance of the men.

Clement Moorlake came in first, with his firm, elastic tread, very different from the slouch, stride or waddle of the bulk of mankind. One could not hear his step without divining how near perfection his propor-

tions must be. He spoke to Mrs. Hilyer with his usual calm, gentle manner, but Althea fancied that the lady in amber satin found his greeting cold. She was certainly very pale.

They held a short dialogue.

"Where have you been all these weeks?" asked she.

"Working away in the fog at a statue that wouldn't come right," said the sculptor.

"Not even for you?" she asked, in a low voice.

Moorlake looked annoyed. "It was not a Galatea—something much more obstinate, but not half so dangerous," he said.

Vincent interrupted them with a boisterous welcome.

"They all want to see the picture, Bertie," said his wife. "And then they want a song, that latest one, you know—and then—"

"And then they must go down into the kitchen and see you make that deiliriously lovely pudding you invented last week!" laughed Bertram.

"Ah," sighed Mrs. Bertram, "we're a wonderful couple."

As two or three of the company moved toward the easel North came and began talking to Mrs. Hilyer. The fireside group, finding the blaze more picturesque than comfortable, also drifted toward the picture. Moorlake stood near Althea.

"I inspired this picture," she confided to him. "I feel quite anxious to see my godchild."

"I hope it's worthy of such a sponsor!" he replied, with mock solemnity.

Vincent wheeled the picture into a good position. "It is called," he said, "'The Faithful Soul.'"

"Which is the faithful one?" asked Banfrey.

"The poor ghost," returned Vincent.

"Ah, it's easy for a ghost to be faithful," said the actor.

Gladys Mellor looked shocked.

The picture was extremely well done. It represented an avenue of lime trees in which stood a man and

a woman. It was night, but the moonlight fell through the breaks between the boughs and revealed the figures. The girl, a lovely creature dressed in a short-waisted white gown, was hanging on the arm of the man. Every curve of her young body told of love and of complete absorption in her companion. But he, a fine, stalwart fellow, was diverted from her by something that was evidently invisible to her. His startled gaze was directed at a form white as a moonbeam and almost as intangible; the face of the fair wraith was more distinct and the expression of mingled reproach and agony on its features was clearly discernible.

"Bravo, Bertie!" said Moorlake, heartily. "This is good. You ought to send it to the Academy."

"Don't you think there are enough amateurs there already?" queried Vincent, with assumed indifference. He was really immensely pleased by Moorlake's honest praise.

"Isn't it good, Mrs. North?" asked the sculptor.

"Alas, poor ghost!" she sighed, her eyes full of tears.

"What is it?" asked Banfrey. "I think it's ripping, old man. Where did you get the idea?"

"From this dear lady," said Vincent, with a look of brotherly regard at Althea—"and from Adelaide Proctor."

"Ah, yes," said Moorlake, "I remember—

"In that one moment's anguish
The thousand years have passed."

"Who was the person?" asked Mrs. Hilyer, who, accompanied by North, had come to look at the picture.

"The faithful soul belonged, of course, to a female ghost," said Nellie Vincent.

"What nonsense!" said Vincent. "How can a soul belong to a ghost? You do muddle things so!"

"It's beautiful, Bertie, beautiful!" said North, "but too ethereal for me. I like real things," and he sauntered away.

"Do you think there is no fidelity in man?" asked Moorlake of Althea, as they lingered a moment beside the picture.

"Not often," said Mrs. North.

"Yet I know a man," he said, reflectively, "who has loved one woman for fifteen years."

"Then he is all the nearer to a change," she laughed, with assumed hardness.

He looked into her eyes almost sadly, and saw that she was an unhappy woman.

"How bitter you are!" he said. "And yet nature has done so much for you. . . . I hope we may meet again; I must go on now." He shook hands with her as he spoke.

"Come to see me," she said, with a strange sense of fear that she might lose him altogether.

"I shall be most happy," he said, in a conventional tone, and went to take leave of the Vincents.

"Are you going to the Bascombes?" asked Mrs. Hilyer.

"No; unfortunately in quite another direction," said Moorlake.

Mrs. Banfrey remarked, a few moments later, as she and Althea put on their cloaks down stairs:

"Nellie is easily deceived. Mrs. Hilyer knew that Moorlake was dining here. That's why she came. She has been in love with him for years"

In the carriage, as they drove home, Oliver North said to his wife: "Do you know that you have been exceptionally odious to-night—even for you?"

"You don't mind telling me so," said Althea.

"Your remarks about marriage were simply depraved. I wonder a decent woman could make them. They make me wonder if you *are* decent. You grow more reckless every day, and let me tell you that your vulgar habit of making eyes at good-looking men is growing on you. You flirted outrageously with that sculptor fellow."

"No one *could* flirt with Mr. Moorlake," said Althea, indignantly. "You are too vulgar!"

"Not so vulgar as the actions I refer to. No one has the courage to tell you your faults but me."

"*You* have plenty of courage!" she said, sharply. Then silence fell between them. When they reached home North put the key in the door without a word and allowed his wife to pass in. She went directly up stairs, and without removing her cloak entered the nursery, where her child lay asleep. The nurse was in a bed beside the crib, and slumbered too deeply to be aware of her mistress's presence. Althea bent over the little girl.

"If it were not for you!" she murmured; "oh, baby, if it were not for you!"

Then she went away noiselessly to her own room.

III

ALTHEA had been one of those unlucky girls who are born for love and for nothing else. Her youth was taken up by poetry and dreams. An orphan of small means, she was brought up by an old-fashioned aunt, who did not take much pains with her education. She had fed her mind on visions of love—innocent enough, but enervating and dangerous, because she made the mistake of supposing that love is the whole of life. Instead of filling her days with interesting pursuits, she waited, wondering when the king would come. She tried to fit her ideal to every man she met, and when Oliver North asked her to marry him, he seemed nearer her romantic standard than the others. She required to be loved. Her existence was incomplete without someone on whom to lavish the great devotion of which she was capable. But she made, in the first flush of her hopefulness and enthusiasm, the mistake of marrying a man who began by being somewhat cold and who ended, as we have seen, by becoming something less than civil. North was a person in whose life women were a mere episode, and not a very interesting

one. He had, more than most men, a talent for fidelity, physical and mental. The idea of loving anyone but his lawful wife would have been to him terrible. It is doubtful whether he ever entertained it. But no feminine creature could play a large rôle in his existence. The charms of mountain-climbing, yachting or exploring strange countries appealed to him irresistibly. When he tired for a time of these pursuits he would return home, expecting to find that his wife had been quietly fulfilling her domestic duties with discretion and was ready to receive him with an ardor devoid of reproaches for his long absence. And that is what he did find. For years Althea accepted this lot as the usual portion of wives, hung on Oliver's words as those of an oracle, punctually discharged her duties, and solaced herself with her child and the companionship of a few women friends. Men she liked individually rather than collectively, but she never had a shadow of a flirtation during all those devoted years.

North combined the passions of an explorer with the didactic talent of a schoolmaster. He thought he knew exactly how everyone should think, feel and act, and in his domestic intervals he occupied himself with forming his wife's character. Pretty young women who find that they have power to charm even in their crude state usually resent being formed, but for years Althea submitted to this process with comparative equanimity.

One day there came a change. During one of Oliver's more than ordinarily protracted yachting cruises, which a constitutional aversion to the sea prevented her sharing, it dawned on her that she did very well without Oliver. The novel discovery gave her a shock. On considering it she realized that without him the house was quieter, everything ran more smoothly, and her nerves were certainly under better control. In short, she became once more an individual, not a faint reflection—became herself, not a poor attempt at a copy of someone

whom she could never really resemble.

When a woman once finds the wings of her soul she is forever out of reach of the man who has sought to cage her. Henceforth Althea belonged, in a sense, to herself, though she had not the courage openly to oppose the hundred small tyrannies with which North oppressed her. He had, without deliberate intention, thrown away a heart rich with unquestioning love. Friends who had anxiously watched the slow process of which he was unconscious, pitied while they blamed him, and feared for the future. Yet he thought he loved her, and it is certain that he loved no one else. Indeed, as she cooled, and failed to cower and weep under his frequent disapproval, he grew warmer and less willing to leave her than of old. What she had once resented she would now have prized—freedom and solitude, leave to live her own life, which, if not heroic, was at least innocent.

North had one fault that no woman ever forgives; he was stingy. Though in possession of an income of about £4,000 a year he disputed every item of the household accounts. Once a month, at least, when the hateful tradesmen's books came in, there was an unpleasant scene between the pair, which usually ended for Althea in a nervous attack. Oliver liked keeping open house, but did not enjoy paying for the pleasure. He was also under the impression that women in society require next to no pin money. Althea's financial position was a painful one, because she had only £50 a year of her own, and she could not possibly dress on such a small sum. She had to plead abjectly with her master when she wanted a new gown.

On the morning after the Vincents' dinner party she entered the library knowing that a disagreeable encounter lay before her. North was reading the paper. On his desk lay a note, stamped and addressed. It contained an order for extensive improvements to his yacht, which was being put in commission.

He looked up at Althea.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, with a sort of sarcastic playfulness. "You never come here unless you want something."

Althea repressed the ready repartee on her lips and said, quietly:

"I *do* want something. I have been overhauling my wardrobe with Barnes, and she and I both think I can't get through the season without some new clothes."

"Why must you quote Barnes? The season is nearly over," said North, with a vexed expression on his face.

"The Summer is here, and I can't possibly make those country visits with the things I have."

"Where are your last year's clothes? Given away, I suppose."

"Worn out, most of them."

"Can't you buy more, if it's absolutely necessary?"

"Certainly, if I have the money."

"You have £100 a year. Most women can make themselves look well on that."

"Fifty of that is my own. If you allowed me a hundred I might manage."

She began to be exasperated, and made a struggle to remain calm. There was a painful tension in her face which would have told her husband what she suffered, but he did not look at her.

"What does it matter what you wear?" he asked. "Women spend far too much on their clothes."

"It matters this much: I go now to a second-rate dressmaker, and I can't afford to do even that. If you refuse to give me a decent allowance I must refuse to go into the world any more."

"What a stagey expression! 'Into the world!' It sounds like a woman in a cheap novel."

She still controlled herself.

"Oliver," she said, in a hard, low voice, "why do you grudge me everything I need? I am not indifferent to your comfort. If our positions were reversed, and I had your income, you would not have to come to me to beg when you needed things. I shouldn't

wait for that. I should give you what you wanted."

"I have no wish to deprive you of what you need. *Need* and *want* are two very different things. You have a charming house, a very good turnout and—"

"A generous husband!" she interrupted, her scorn breaking all bounds. "I have my answer. You refuse me—*refuse* me—you, with your thousands a year—a few pounds for the necessities of life! Oliver, has it ever occurred to you that I hate my life? that I long to be free?"

She flushed all over as she spoke, alarmed at her own bluntness.

Her husband looked at her.

"You hate your life because you do nothing with it. You starve your brain. You should have pursuits and interests, as I have. And as to freedom, what woman has more? I leave you alone for six months out of the twelve. Not many men have so much confidence in their wives."

"You are a strange mixture!" she retorted, "with your 'absolute confidence' when you are away, and your constant suspicion when you are at home! But there is no use in talking to you about all this. Do you refuse me the money?"

"I can't very well let you have any now," he answered. "The *Jessamine* needs a lot done to her—"

"Ah, my rival!" cried Althea, with a short laugh. "I might have known you would deny me everything sooner than grudge her a coat of paint."

"Many wives would be happy to have only an inanimate rival!" said he. "I am going away soon, and you'll be rather quiet, I suppose, and won't want many clothes."

Without another word Althea left the room. Interviews of this sort always left her with a half-stunned feeling. She could not understand why her life must be bound up with this man's—why her youth and her prettiness must be wasted in such uncongenial companionship. As she sat brooding in her morning-room, her unpaid bills spread out before her, suddenly an image rose before

her mind. The eyes of Clement Moorlake seemed to look down on her troubled soul—to penetrate into her weary heart—and their phantasmal glance brought quiet to her being. "There are kind and gentle men in the world, after all!" she thought. "Thank God for them!"

IV

SHE felt the imperative need of getting away to some place where she could breathe fresh air and see grass and flowers. Still in a sort of blind rage, she went to the nearest underground railway station and took a ticket for Kew. How often she had sat in cab, train, carriage or omnibus, with her heart full of bitterness, her soul in revolt! She wearied herself with thought; her lips framed, without uttering, long colloquies between her husband and herself—imaginary scenes in which at last she triumphed and convinced him of his meanness. The unhappy woman had been born with a strong sense of the dramatic—a gift that adds another pang to an unhappy lot. All her life appeared to her in scenes, acts, situations; and of each she felt the force and poignancy, knowing meanwhile that she lacked the self-control necessary to enact a consistent rôle. She lacked the balance to adhere to a certain line of conduct, or she might have mastered her tyrant. She was canine—not feline, and there lay her failure. The dog watches his master with fear or affection—or both—written in his eyes; the cat pursues her sinuous way with complete indifference. The dog looks at you *with* his eyes—the consciousness of the cat sits behind hers, and peeps *through* them, so that none can divine her meaning. When she confers a favor she makes the recipient feel proud. As for the dog, one knows *he* will be pleased if thrown a kind word, and there is rather a contempt for his ready demonstration of affection.

The woman who lays bare her soul

to a man has lost her hold on him. Her very honesty is her ruin.

Through the purgatory of the underground railway Althea reached the paradise of Kew Gardens. They were in full beauty with their masses of gorgeous rhododendron, the daisied turf, like green embroidered velvet, and the birds trilling, warbling, whistling and chirping in the heavenly blue air of June.

The human race began in a garden—would that it had stayed there!

The turmoil in the soul of the woman abated in the calm of the place.

For hours Althea sat under the great trees or slowly paced the fragrant ways. The one great safeguard of ardent, headlong natures is a latent power to right themselves. The pendulum swings lightly back again. By three o'clock Mrs. North began to realize that life was not quite without charm, and that she was prosaically hungry. Almost laughing at this assertion of her physical being, she made her way toward the teahouse. And as she turned a leafy corner, she came full on Clement Moorlake. Life is sadly unlike the drama in that the time, the place and the man are generally wide apart. To-day, of all the persons on earth whom she might have met, Althea wished most to see the sculptor. Yet for a moment she shrank from the encounter. Only for a moment; Moorlake looked like the high priest of conventionality. Althea's exuberant fancy quailed before his calm greeting.

"Is this one of your favorite haunts, Mrs. North?" he asked. "I come here often when London seems to press too heavily."

"I love it," said Althea. "I break away sometimes and sit for an hour under the trees. Why is it that life under the trees is so easy?"

In her words there was an underlying pathos, an unconscious claim for sympathy, that did not escape Moorlake's keen perceptions.

"Because," he said, looking down at her with a kindly light in his eyes, "we have nothing to do but rest

and gather strength there. But you would not like life always to be made up of sheltering boughs and soft turf, would you? You are too active, too intelligent, to like inglorious ease."

"How do you know?" she asked.
"You have seen me only once."

"That is enough to enable me to at least guess at your character, isn't it? A sculptor becomes a bit of a physiognomist—but how personal I am getting!" he went on. "Forgive me!"

"I think nothing is interesting unless it is personal," admitted Althea, more gaily. Her color had come back and her tread was once more elastic.

"Interesting—yes," said her companion, reflectively. "But I have rather a horror of personalities. One's own sorrows are enough, without knowing the griefs of others."

"What a selfish sentiment! Do you build a high wall about yourself?"

"With a door in it!" he said, smiling; "and I have been weak enough sometimes to lend the key."

As he looked at her his somewhat sad, stern face relaxed, and again she saw the warm, friendly light in the eyes which belied the coldness of his usual manner.

"Are there many keys?" she asked, playfully.

"Not out of my keeping," he answered. "I have learned to neither borrow nor lend—now."

"I know those resolutions! One says, 'This is the last time,' and one says it every time."

"But some time must really be the last!"

"Yes; but the charm is, one never knows that that particular time is the last! . . . I wish I could build a wall! I have only a hedge full of gaps—not even a thorn or two!"

"Only flowers on the top?"

Both laughed, and then were silent, wondering whether they had known each other ten minutes or half a lifetime.

"I once read in a theosophical book," resumed Althea, "that one

must imagine one's self enclosed in a sort of shell, like a horse chestnut, and then the sorrows of the world will glide off, not stay to harass and torment. Isn't it a funny idea?"

"Not a pleasant one, certainly. Here we are at the tea place. Are you hungry?" inquired Moorlake, abruptly.

"Well—yes—I am," admitted Althea. "It seems too gross a confession to make in such a place, on such a day, but I've had no luncheon."

"My dear lady! what a tragedy! Instead of metaphysics we should be having tea—or shall it be 'cold luncheon, two to six?'" asked Moorlake, glancing at the placard above them.

"Oh, tea, by all means—buns, cresses, jam—all sorts of lovely things!" cried Althea, softly, with a child's pleasure.

The place was deserted, the lunchers having departed and the tea drinkers not having yet arrived. They chose a table outside the building, and ordered tea.

Althea's day of misery had suddenly turned into an exquisitely interesting occasion, and fate having contrived a tête-à-tête with the most interesting man of her acquaintance, she submitted without a murmur.

"I was most interested last night," said Moorlake, as they settled themselves comfortably opposite each other at the little table, "in the conversation about constancy."

"Mrs. Mellor was shocked, I think," said Althea. "Isn't she lovely?"

"As lovely as waxwork—and as attractive."

"I thought beauty was always attractive."

"Yes, for a moment—but think of a life spent with such a woman!"

"I have always supposed that men do not require brains in the women they love."

"Some men may not, and if they don't they don't deserve them. But you can't seriously think that pink-and-white inanity could satisfy a man with any mind? Charm is the enduring quality. I know women of fifty who will never be old, because they

have charm. That nameless something holds a man's interest longer than anything else."

His remarkable eyes were fixed dreamily on the gray-green distance. Althea looked at him and wondered more than ever what the story of his life was. His face had nothing middle-aged in its lines, though the thick, waving hair above it was shot with a few gray threads.

"I wish," said Althea, averting her gaze as his eyes traveled back to her, "I wish I could for one hour be a man, in order to discover your standpoint. We women are so helpless—so in the dark! We have no freedom in which to gain experience. We never learn to know you well. There seems to be no friendship possible between us. It is all passionate love—or utter indifference. I wish I could know just once what you really are; what standards you have—what beliefs—what convictions."

"There are as many standards as there are men," said Moorlake.

"But there are hard-and-fast rules for you as for us. You must not cheat at cards, for instance. You must not 'kiss and tell.' I always think life must be easy to men, because the world expects so little from them."

"Most decent men have a few virtues besides the negative one of not being blackguards," laughed Moorlake. "Don't you think we have our struggles?—that we mark out a line of conduct for ourselves, and try with tears and prayers, perhaps, to keep to it? I think men and women are wonderfully alike, only you are more complex."

"Have you ever studied palmistry?" asked Althea. "Do you notice how complicated a woman's hand is, compared with a man's? Our hands are full of little, nervous, niggling, criss-cross lines, and yours have plain, deep-cut marks, either good or bad."

"Those little marks mean flirtation," said Moorlake, laughing. "Let me see yours."

"I have a chain of them—but they aren't true," said Althea, coloring

like a girl and hiding her hand under the table.

"Even a woman's hands can lie, then," said Moorlake, still regarding her with an amused smile. "Her lips are not false enough! What little hands you American women have!"

"All wrong from a sculptor's point of view, of course. I feel that I must admit—no—do I dare?"

She paused and looked at him side-long, with a sort of childlike glance that charmed him.

"Confess?" said he; "certainly. I can endure a great deal."

"Well—I don't like statues," she admitted, and colored brightly.

"I'm very glad!" said he, placidly. "That saves a lot of trouble. You can't think how tiresome people are who think they care, and in point of fact know nothing whatever about art. They torment me with ignorant criticisms until my politeness gives way."

"That I can't imagine," said Althea. "You are fearfully polite."

Moorlake laughed.

"Do you find that fault with the men of this generation? When I was young one didn't dare to be rude."

"That, I suppose, was a long time ago."

"So long that you seem to me a mere child."

Althea shook her head, and said, half-sadly, "I shall never be grown up—and eternal youth of the soul doesn't save one's poor face from wrinkles. It is terrible to be a middle-aged baby!"

There was now no further pretext for remaining at the table, so the waiter was paid, and they rose to go away.

The day was growing more enchanting as it declined. The level beams of light played a thousand lovely tricks with flowers and sward. The birds' hearts gushed out in melody. London and its smoke seemed far away. Sordid care and bitter disappointment have no place in Kew Gardens.

A calm settled on Althea's heart—a calm with a strange, pleasant flut-

tering underneath. She seemed to see how happy life might have been.

She and Moorlake went back to town by underground railway; and for once the sulphurous air seemed sweet and bracing. She reached home in a mood of quiet happiness, which not even North's continued captiousness could mar.

But there is one drawback to spending an hour or two with a very sympathetic and delightful person—one wants immediately to spend many more!

And the opportunity for this did not at once recur.

V

CONCEIVE a young and pretty woman alternately bullied and neglected, and you will understand that she may some day begin to cry for the moon. It is generally that moon which is so brilliant and attractive and far away, called Love.

We call to it to come down, and it stays above; we rake for it in the stagnant water of a pond, as did the "Three Sillies" in the fairy tale, and we succeed only in stirring up the mud. Love, that protean phantasm, is no doubt a useful thing to the poet and the writer of songs; but the search after it is a sad and unremunerative occupation. Althea had not yet begun it; but she was frequently troubled by a strong desire to see Clement Moorlake again.

Rigid moralists always say, in speaking of a poor, disappointed, mismated woman and the needs of her heart: "Are not her children enough for her?" As well direct a man to the town pump to allay a craving for champagne. What woman of heart and imagination does not crave the thousand touches of cherishing tenderness which a man who loves her bestows on her life? Can she discuss the problem of her soul with her baby? Can she spend all her evenings in hearing her children's artless prayers? Can even the education of her family become so intensely entralling that she has

neither time nor inclination to listen to Love's voice? A human woman must and will love somebody. When it isn't the right man—which it seldom is—it will be the wrong one; and she always thinks that the wrong one is the right one, or would have been if she had had half a chance.

Oliver North departed, as usual, at a few hours' notice, on a perfectly rational and respectable yachting cruise, in company with several estimable male friends. The law could pick no flaw in his behavior; the divorce court could not pronounce on it. Meanwhile his bored and starved wife was left at home on short commons, both temporal and spiritual.

"You are a wonderfully good woman," said Nellie Vincent one day when she and Althea were driving together. "I wonder why you've kept straight so long."

Althea opened her eyes.

"Why, how could I be anything else? I've never been tempted," she said.

"Then," said Nellie, "the men are better than I thought."

"No one would dare to make love to me," added Althea, as an after-thought. "Besides, women don't want to be wicked. They only want to be loved."

"Ah, yes, that's so simple, isn't it?" said Nellie, with a sort of grim gaiety. "What a pity the men won't understand!" Then, after a pause, "Moorlake is going to call on you."

"Really? How nice!" said Althea. "I think he is most interesting."

"A good many have thought so. Don't, my dear, *don't* love *him*. It won't repay you."

"I can't imagine having the impertinence to love him. I should revere him."

It was about a week after this that the sculptor appeared in Pont street. Althea had thought, after their semi-intimate tea at Kew, that she should certainly see him very soon. But she didn't know Moorlake. He was vagueness itself when it came to

making calls or performing any other social duties. Even his friendships had vast lapses, during which he was seen by no one but his old mother, with whom he lived.

When he entered the drawing-room Althea was listlessly reading a small volume of verses which had lately appeared. It was a fine afternoon, but she had not felt like rousing herself to go out. She was in the mood that comes to some women during the London season when every hour is not filled with pleasant engagements. They feel that they ought to be doing something brilliant and fascinating every day, and when they are not they lose interest in life.

Moorlake's entrance was a welcome interruption. It seemed all at once that she had a hundred things to say to him; and yet when they were seated near each other, with at least half an hour before them, she began to experience a sense of vacancy.

He began with the usual conventionalities—the weather, inquiries after Oliver North, and uninteresting remarks on the subjects of the day. It did not escape him that there was a certain dryness in her replies when he mentioned her husband, and he at once let the subject drop. She who was so fluent with other men was perturbed and unnatural in his presence. She wanted to appear well—to win his regard, and she found herself dull and almost speechless. His very look to-day was irritatingly impersonal. Only life in the abstract seemed capable of touching him. The longer they sat thus the tenser became the strain. The appearance of tea made a happy diversion.

Presently Moorlake said: "What were you reading when I came in? Something new?"

"A curious little booklet called 'Poems of a Pessimist.' There appears to be much pessimism in it and little poetry," said Althea.

"Won't you read a little? I fancy that you must read well," he observed.

"Here is a bit—very pathetic, though not inspired at all," said she,

turning over the leaves. "It is called 'Woman's Lot.' That is generally the preface to a moan, isn't it? It says:

"For what are women made?
To sit and wait—and wait—and try to
hope;
To take with thankfulness the crumbs of
life;
To press back tears that else would dim
the sight;
To choke down sobs that else would rend
the throat;
To bear the sorrows that are laid on
them,
Sometimes by hands that should be their
support.
For this are women made.

"And what is their reward?
A year or two of love—sweet, but soon
cold;
A gleam or two of sun, soon hid by
clouds;
A fervent kiss—a hand clasp—an em-
brace—
A kind word, and the dear-bought privi-
lege
Of bearing pains and sorrows not their
own—
The rest is vain regret.

"Isn't that dreadful?" she asked, faltering a little over the last line.

"Dreadful!" assented Moorlake; "and written, of course, by a woman."

"Of course. I wonder what made her so bitter and sad? A man, I suppose."

"It is not always like that. Men become pessimists, too, you know, through women."

"I'm so glad!" Althea almost smiled. "I wish I could meet one."

"One sits before you," said Moorlake. He also was smiling slightly, and a little color had risen in his pale face.

"*You?* Impossible! You are too strong and wise and well balanced to let such a poor, inadequate thing as a woman change your life."

"Who told you I was all those nice things?"

"Several people—but I knew it before."

"Do you know, Mrs. North," said Moorlake, after a slight pause full of interest for both, "you have a very unwholesome effect on me? You positively make me morbid, and you cause me to talk about myself. That will never do. You mustn't look over my wall, you know!"

"I can't!" she protested. "I can't see a thing. It's much too high and has spikes on top. But you are rather unkind to go about like a fascinating novel with the pages uncut."

"Do you prefer men who make their moan to every new acquaintance?" he asked.

She shrank a little and changed color.

"Forgive me," she said, quietly. "I was forgetting that we are strangers."

Most men would have found this an opportunity for a pretty speech. Moorlake only observed: "Not quite strangers, I hope." Then he added: "What is the reason there is so much unhappiness among women, especially of late years? Is it because you are idle and fanciful?—or what is it?"

"Because we are idealists, and we won't accept the world as it is; and the world to most women means—some man."

"I think that diagnosis is too flattering to us, don't you? There are many women just now who appear to be quite independent of us."

"Who appear so; but in reality you will find, if you look, that the eternal masculine is at the bottom of all their restless strivings. They work to forget, most of them. I suppose work dulls the pain of one's heart, but it can't cure it. It's only a temporary anæsthetic. Do you suppose if I am unhappy and scrub a floor, or write a novel, as the case may be, that when my floor is clean or my novel written I won't be just as unhappy as I was before?"

"Possibly," said Moorlake. "Go on and tell me more. You interest me enormously."

"The more I see of life the less I understand it," Althea continued, her eyes and cheeks burning. She was

at that moment compellingly attractive. "It seems to me as if Providence had put us all down on this earth like a mass of blind kittens. We crawl and mew, and scratch and knock into one another, and have no idea why we're here or where we're going. As soon as one kitten gets to love another it loses it; we have scarcely got our eyes open when we're snatched away to some other strange place, before we have a chance to do more than to wonder what it's all about."

Moorlake leaned forward and looked at her intently. Her eyes shone with tears.

"My dear lady!" he said, in a deep, tender voice, "is that really your idea of life?"

"Sometimes—not always. It is today." She tried to smile, and failing, got up and stood at the window, with her back to him. He came and stood near her—very near, though there was no actual contact. His proximity thrilled her from head to foot.

"Dear Mrs. North," he said, in a low voice, "I am years older than you are, and therefore perhaps a little wiser. Believe me, you are not a blind kitten! Life is full of sunshine for you if you will look for it. We all go through a trying period in which we feel that we are failures. No one worth his salt escapes that phase. But by-and-bye we recognize what our work in the world is to be. We cease to expect great happiness, but we find—resignation."

Althea turned her face toward him.

"Have you found it?" she asked.

"I think so," he said, gravely.

"And with it—indifference," she said.

"I hope so—but I am not sure."

There was a curious spark in his eyes as he spoke.'

"Friendship is left for all of us," Althea cried, impulsively, almost with pleading in her voice. "Be my friend! Help me! I do so need a friend! I felt at once that I could trust you. Be my friend!"

"I can't," he said, almost roughly. "You can't trust me. You mustn't—

I don't trust myself!" He flushed scarlet.

"Oh, you don't understand me!" she exclaimed. "You ought to—you're not like other men. I *mean* what I say. I have dreamed for years of such a friendship, which should be a constant consolation for all that one suffers. One gets bruised and battered on the sharp corners of life, and the regard, the interest of a good man would be a healing balm."

She stood and looked at him with eyes full of a pure pleading. He did not misunderstand her. He took her hand very gently and led her back to her seat. Then he sat down beside her.

"My dear Mrs. North," he said, gravely, "it is impossible. There is no such friendship."

"There is!" she persisted. "I say there is! There shall be. I will *make* it true."

"What you call friendship has another name," he said.

"Won't you believe me that I didn't mean that?" she begged.

"I am quite certain you did not," said Moorlake. "But I *know*, and you don't. It might be possible for you, but not for a man. We are not angels."

"Don't tell me that. I *know* there is a middle course."

"Not for us men. Our motto is, 'All or nothing.'"

They had both regained their self-command.

"I shall always persist," said Althea, "that I am right."

Moorlake rose to go.

"You may try the 'middle course' in thirty years—but not now, please, if you value our peace of mind."

"Please believe, Mr. Moorlake," said Althea, as she shook hands with him, "that I am not always hysterical."

A smile was his only answer.

As he walked away he thought: "A most unhappy woman. There is only one thing that could make her more unhappy, and that shall never come to her through me."

The next day Oliver North unex-

pectedly returned and carried his family off to America.

Unkind circumstances—or a merciful Providence—kept Moorlake and Althea apart for four months.

VI

For several years Mrs. Hilyer had been a widow. She had a daughter of fifteen, though she herself looked marvelously young without the aid of art. The girl was in France, at a school where accomplishments were plentiful though food was scanty. Mrs. Hilyer very much disliked having a daughter of fifteen in evidence; besides, it was so bad for the child to meet men, and Mrs. Hilyer's house was full of them of an afternoon.

The deceased Hilyer had been an easy-going, genial person in the City—the sort of man who slaps a friend on the back with one hand to conceal the fact that the other is in the friend's pocket. Clarice had been a great help to him. She attracted almost everybody who knew her; the occasional dissentient voices were so few and faint that the general paean of praise drowned them. Clarice got a very amusing, pleasant circle about her. She had a great many men friends, and a number of women liked and admired her. There was one man particularly—George Watson—who had been for years very much in evidence. People said the friendship was extremely pretty and manifestly innocent, because they used to kiss each other good-night in public. When Hilyer died somebody said, "Now she'll marry Watson." But a cynic replied: "Men don't marry widows they've kissed as wives."

Certainly the marriage did not come off. Clarice Hilyer continued to live in a small house in Cheyne Walk, and appeared to enjoy life as much as ever. During her varied experience in matters of the heart she had the rare good sense to avoid concentration. The woman that concentrates suffers. She only tires the

man she loves, for nothing bores a man so much as excessive affection. She may give her body to be burned to please him, but it will only annoy him. The Indian widows used to wait for this sacrifice till their lords were past being bored by it.

Clarice could keep a leash of admirers well in hand. Her nature was complex and sinuous; compared to Althea's it was what Bradshaw is to an A B C—when you were once started you couldn't tell when or where you would arrive.

During a Winter spent in Rome Clarice became acquainted with Moorlake.

Henceforth other men had few attractions for her. She tried every resource at her command to gain his love; she never left anything to chance, but marked out her plan of life as women draw a pattern in a tea cloth, afterward following it out with embroidery silk. She knew what she wanted very distinctly, and when her silk grew knotted or broke she picked it out or cut it off and began again. She never had those fatal moments of frankness which make a woman blurt out things in five minutes that spoil the work of years. She studied Moorlake as a musician studies a score, a painter a model; and the more she studied the more she found that the moon she was crying for was only a burnt-out crater. It took all her exquisite self-control to keep back the mad bitterness of the discovery. The sculptor was as hard as his marble; and his beautiful, almost stately, courtesy to all women only added a sting to the despair of the one that loved him.

For fifteen years Moorlake had loved the memory of one woman. What had been the history—whether she were alive or dead—no one knew, and no one dared ask him. In his early days he had been all made up of sentiment and passion. Some cruel disappointment dried up the one and left little of the other. He avoided all intimate relations with women. He was accustomed to say that society loses half its charm when people

confide their troubles to one another. Before this reserve of character, this killing indifference, all Clarice's weapons fell powerless. Moorlake had one very charming quality, however: he always knew how to save a woman's self-respect. If any feminine admirer became indiscreetly pressing in her attentions, by a happy knack he managed to make it appear that in reality it was he who had taken the initiative; whereas he spent a great part of his life in repelling such attacks.

When Clarice Hilyer left Rome she lost sight of him. Once she wrote to him, and received a prompt reply—a perfect model of a friendly letter, cool, pleasant, non-committal. There their intercourse ended. On the night when they met at the Vincents' house Clarice had come because she accidentally heard that he was dining there. It was not till Winter that she saw him again. They met at a Sunday luncheon, and found themselves next each other at table.

Clarice opened fire by saying: "I want so much to see your studio. How does it compare with the Roman one?"

"Very much as the English climate compares with the Italian," Moorlake replied, smiling, and ignoring the first part of her sentence.

"Ah, one misses the sun," she assented. "Do you think you are going to like Chelsea?"

"I can hardly tell yet—but inasmuch as I am a near neighbor of yours—" another smile finished the sentence.

Clarice smiled also. She was too clever ever to look sentimental.

"Neighbors are proverbially strangers," she said. "Perhaps we shall meet occasionally on the Embankment."

"It is a fine place for constitutionals. I think I shall become fond of the river, even when it is cold and gray, as it is now."

"Your mother is with you?"

"Yes."

During the brief pause that ensued the man on the other side of Mrs. Hilyer spoke to her.

It was not till some minutes later that she turned swiftly and said, in an undertone: "I cannot help thinking that we ought to be friends. We have both outlived our illusions, and we are both—lonely."

Her voice shook a little.

"I thought loneliness was one of the few things not to be had in London," said Moorlake. "As for you, you are surrounded all day by an admiring throng, and have no time to be alone."

"There is a loneliness of the heart, I should say, if people hadn't ceased to plead guilty of having such things as hearts. You boast of being quite immune, I believe."

"Don't accuse me of anything so ill-bred as boasting! But I always think that hearts are best kept in the background, don't you?"

"Or dispensed with altogether. Have you seen Mrs. Oliver North since her return?"

His companion's abruptness confused Moorlake, as perhaps it was intended to do.

He hesitated for a moment, feeling suddenly guilty, he didn't know why, and then said, simply, "No; have you?"

"No, but I hear they are very unhappy."

Here again a diversion occurred, and the subject was not renewed. But the one allusion had the effect of sending Moorlake to Pont street that afternoon.

He was in his mind so strenuously opposed to cultivating any intimacy with Althea that it was almost with a sense of surprise he found himself in her drawing-room.

A number of persons had been lunching with the Norths, but the last one had gone, and Oliver was out.

As Moorlake entered he received a distinct impression of the lassitude and dejection of Mrs. North's bearing—the worn, tired look on her face. In moments of animation the lines were smoothed away; but now that she fancied herself alone they were very apparent.

At sight of Moorlake she seemed

almost agitated. A sudden gleam of joy swept over her face. He did not know—what was indeed the case—that for four months she had craved a sight of him.

The springs of sympathy surged up within him, and there was real feeling in his tone as he took her hand and asked her how she was.

"Oh, I'm unspeakably glad to get home!" she said, smiling brightly.

"And yet," he said, sitting beside her on the long sofa before the wood fire—"and yet you have come from what was your home."

"Yes—in a way, but not in any true sense. I never felt contented there. England was somewhere in my blood calling to me; and when I came here I at once recognized its claim on me."

"That is very pleasant for us to hear!" said Moorlake. "How did New York strike you after your absence?"

"As a place that is not over-comfortable for the rich and quite impossible for the poor. One must be either a millionaire or a pauper to live there. What strikes me as remarkable whenever I go back is the number of well-dressed women. Hardly anyone looks dowdy. And yet one knows that they are not all rich."

"American women spend a great deal on their clothes, I have always been told," observed Moorlake.

"Yes, when they have the money;—and sometimes, I fancy, when they haven't," replied Althea. "You can't conceive how grotesque it is to see women in beautiful gowns hanging on to a strap in an electric tram car—liable to be sent flying at any moment into the laps of strange men who do *not* get up to give them a seat! The air is full of clashing of bells, snorting of trains overhead, clattering of hoofs, rolling of wheels! It is a pandemonium, which grows worse every year."

"And how did your husband get on there? Does he like it?" asked Moorlake.

"Not particularly; we weren't there

long, only in the Autumn, a few weeks ago. In August Oliver was yachting; he is always yachting when he is not mountain-climbing, you know."

"And you—I hope you amused yourself. I suppose you have a great many friends."

"Yes—but one does so drop out in the course of a year or two! Everything changes. New people are always cropping up and taking the old houses one used to know."

"It is becoming so here, too."

"But London is in a measure conservative. One sees the same butlers at the same houses year after year. The servant question in America has got beyond anything you can imagine."

"And on the whole you are glad to be here?"

"Oh, inexpressibly glad."

She looked as if she were very sincere.

"What plans has your husband made? Is he going to run away again soon?" asked Moorlake.

"Not yet, I think," she answered. "We shall stay at home now for a time."

"Have you any special projects for the Winter?" asked Moorlake. "I mean, have you a hobby?"

"No," said Althea; "I wish I had! A middle age without hobbies is worse than 'old age without cards,' which has been spoken of as such a terrible thing."

"Middle age is nothing to you, Mrs. North," replied Moorlake, "and need be nothing for at least fifteen years to come."

"I am over thirty," said Althea, smiling, "and I should be sorry to think I was only half through my pilgrimage."

Moorlake raised his hand as one playfully threatens a child.

"Again the mournful note! I thought we were to have no more 'blind kittens!'" he said, with a humorous light in his eyes.

"Oh, haven't you forgotten the blind kitten yet?" asked she. "I've been one for months, and sometimes a deaf and dumb one—which is hard

to believe of a woman, I know—but it's true."

Her face wore a look half-sad, half-merry, which made her charming. Moorlake's heart relented. Why must he always assume the highly didactic pose in her presence? He bent toward her slightly and let his eyes, in all their expressive beauty, rest on hers.

"Do you know," he said, "there are two reasons why I must never be an intimate friend of yours; can you guess them?"

Althea felt a quite irrational excitement pulsing through her veins. She withdrew her eyes and said, half-nervously: "I can't guess. Tell me."

"One is," said the sculptor, "that I am so cynical and morbid that I should only make you more low-spirited, and the other—well, I should want more than friendship has to offer."

As soon as he had uttered these words he cursed his recklessness. Their effect on Althea was intense. A wave of color swept over her face, and was succeeded by a pathetic pallor. Her bosom heaved. What was there to answer? At such moments an impulsive woman who loves must make a superhuman effort at self-control, or break down and betray herself.

Which course Althea was about to take remained a mystery, for at the very moment that she was trying to frame a reply, Oliver North entered.

He seemed in a good humor, and greeted Moorlake warmly.

"Are you dining out to-night?" he asked, presently.

Moorlake replied that he was not.

"Come to us at eight, if you'll excuse such an informal invitation," said North. "I know you are hard to catch. Bertie Vincent and his wife are coming. You will second the invitation, won't you, Althea?" turning to his wife. She was feverishly flushed, but Oliver's careless eye did not observe the fact.

"Oh, yes, of course. I should like it immensely," she said at once. Her eyes encountered Moorlake's.

"May I really?" he asked, almost with eagerness.

"Certainly," she said, smiling. "Do come."

"Many thanks," he answered, recovering his conventional tone, which seldom deserted him. Then, rising, "I have another call to make," he added, "and must get back to Chelsea to dress, and also to tell my mother that I'm dining out."

He shook hands with the Norths, and Oliver accompanied him down stairs, talking agreeably all the way.

Althea's mind was in a tumult as she dressed for dinner. Cold-blooded, reasonable women may consider as preposterous the idea of a woman falling in love on short acquaintance and without great encouragement. But these virtuous critics must make large allowance for temperament and circumstances. Althea's unhappiness was not merely passive. Her husband's presence acted like a moral blister. A rankling sense of wrong and injustice inflicted on her during a term of years incensed her constantly against him. She had no illusions left in regard to him. She knew that she never could be even comfortable or peaceful with him again. From the very beginning, from her first glimpse of Clement Moorlake, he had taken hold of her imagination. There was a great void in her life waiting to be filled, and to her it seemed that he, of all men, could best fill it. The words that he had allowed to escape his disciplined lips to-day set her very soul on fire. She did not realize—as many naturally pure women do not—what is involved in a great passion—that no matter how large the spiritual element in it may be, there is the insistent clamoring of the earthly nature which will always make itself heard.

To her Moorlake was a hero of romance—perfect, without insipidity. She saw only the first steps of the path on which she had set her feet, and they seemed to lead upward. Women can go on much longer than men ignoring the bare facts of passion, or they can more easily wreath them about with the garlands of sen-

timent. When the flowers wither and fall off they are sorry, startled, and even surprised.

At the same time that Althea was standing in the glare of electric light, mechanically preparing for her next meeting with Moorlake, he was steeped in a poignant sense of what he had done. The habit of reticence, which he had painfully cultivated now for many years, had suddenly failed him. He could not help knowing from experience—though neither a cad nor a coxcomb—that his personality had extraordinary power over women. Being that rare animal, an honorable and conscientious man, he had tried not to influence them in the slightest degree. He was liberally endowed with every quality that goes to make a successful flirt; but his conscience, no less than his distaste for such conquests, stood in the way of his being one. It is astonishing how many men, who are otherwise gentlemen, do not hesitate to make love to their neighbors' wives, and having done so fall to a lower depth of dishonor—that of failing to abide by the result.

If there was one thing Clement abhorred more than another it was the slightest shade of duplicity in a man's relations with women. He could understand—being a man, not an angel—that there might be circumstances under which you might have the misfortune to love your neighbor's wife. But if you did, and should in any way compromise the lady, it was inconceivable that you should not stand by her before the world. His opinion was that a man ought to consider long and carefully before entering on an *affaire* with a woman; but that, having once decided to enter, he could not honorably draw back.

To be sure, the few words that had escaped him to-day would have meant to some women nothing at all. But he knew that Althea was different; he could see that she waited thirstily for every sign of friendship and affection—that she would treasure every utterance of his like an evangel.

It was this knowledge that made

him feel deeply responsible. Naturally enough, he was not absolutely invulnerable. Though he always told himself that the best part of his nature was dead, there was still left much that was emotional. No man can be constantly appealed to by a charming, devoted woman without being in danger of responding to her; and with a kind, chivalrous man there is always the subtle temptation to make the woman happy with such love as he still has to offer, rather than to mortify her by a repulse, no matter how gentle.

Moorlake was shocked to find that he could not at once adjust his social armor. The "horse chestnut shell" of reserve, laughingly alluded to by Althea in a former conversation, would not fit to-night. "After all, what a bother life is!" he thought. "Men and women are natural enemies; where the sex question once enters into anything, all peace and pleasure are at an end."

He scarcely knew the state of his own mind as he rolled along in a humble brown 'bus to Pont street. When he saw Althea his trouble deepened. Her eyes said, "What next?" There was feverish joy in them—intense expectancy. Fortunately, the Vincents and North were in the room; his conventional manner—"priggish," Nellie Vincent called it—soon returned to him.

Althea was in the midst of a tempest, moral and physical, which rendered her quite incapable of judging what impression she was producing. She saw Nellie regarding her with unusual interest. She was afraid to look at Clement, who sat beside her, and she ostentatiously talked with Bertie Vincent on the other side. She felt guilty. Though so little had happened—nothing, in fact—the world seemed changed. She was so absurdly ignorant of men that she fancied a stray, careless phrase from the man she loved was going to alter the universe.

She had had no experience of the creatures who are all flames and darts to-day and all indifference and con-

tempt to-morrow. Clement was a good man; but the good and the bad are singularly alike when it comes to dealings with their natural dupes. They both make love and are both soon sorry; only the good ones pity the women, while the bad ones are sorry only for themselves.

Oliver North was a very charming host when nothing had happened to cross him. He was far from being deficient in brains, and this evening he was unusually entertaining. He liked the Vincents sincerely, and seemed to have forgotten that he was ever potentially jealous of Moorlake. Conversation flowed smoothly on.

Moorlake remarked that Althea was not at ease in the presence of her husband. He guessed that North had a way of taking her to task, when they were left alone, for everything she had said. Such a practice soon freezes the most spontaneous woman. There was at times a cutting tone in North's voice when he addressed his wife, a sort of sardonic humor in his allusions to her, which quite explained her want of ease. Between her wish to please Clement and her fear of offending Oliver, Althea's ordeal was a trying one. North was the kind of man who could not let even a culinary failure go unnoticed. He would pause in the midst of a story of mountain-climbing—one of his hobbies—to observe that the bread sauce was like a poultice. This evening he fell foul of the salad dressing.

Althea pressed her hands together in a sort of small nervous panic.

"I'm *so* sorry!" she said; "I ought to have made it myself."

"My wife," said North, addressing the company in general, "believes in doing nothing herself which she can get done for her. Hence this excess of vinegar."

"I thought the salad particularly nice," said Bertie.

"That's right!—flatter Althea. She thrives on flattery. You see, only the husband has the courage to tell her of her faults."

"That makes one glad that Eng-

land is not a polyandrous country," said Nellie.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful," quoted Bertie. "Give me an enemy every time."

"But let me choose my enemy, if he has to kiss me!" laughed Nellie.

Althea said nothing; she felt the pity in Moorlake's eyes. The salad-dressing incident was unimportant in itself, but it was a text from which her whole married life might have been preached.

After dinner North's humor changed and he became affable again.

Bertie sat down to the piano, and Nellie led North into the far end of the room to look at some new photographs, with the kind intent to leave Althea and Clement together. They were for some minutes speechless. Althea sat stiff and upright like an automaton, her cheeks burning—a poor, unhappy creature who had been pitchforked by fate into the wrong environment, or placed by Providence in a hard primary school, according as one inclines to the pagan or the Christian theory of life. Moorlake was thinking how he pitied her—how, with scarcely a throb of his lower nature, he could find it in his heart to shelter her in his arms. She inwardly palpitated with what she scarcely recognized yet as an immense love.

Bertie began singing. He had a lovely tenor voice, which he made light of, as of his other gifts. The second verse of his song—one of the perfect love songs of the world—became thrilling as he sang it—he, the happy married man with no yearnings for a change of lot. The eternal, passionate unrest that is in the heart of every artist—writer, singer, player—burst out in the lines:

"Wenn du mich liebst so wie ich dich,
Soll ich dein eigen sein—
Heiss wie der Stahl und fest wie der Stein
Soll deine Liebe sein."

"Do you know German?" whispered Althea.

"Enough to understand," said Clement.

Bertie went on and plunged into Grieg's "*Ich Liebe Dich*"—and how much Grieg has to answer for is known to all those who have heard that song sung as it should be. Clement lost himself in the music.

It was not he, but somebody else in temporary possession of his body, who leaned over to Althea and said:

"You have never been to my studio. Won't you come to tea with me one day this week?"

She looked at him and answered, without hesitation, swiftly and softly:

"Thank you. Tuesday?"

"Yes; about five."

"I will come."

Nellie came back from the corner with the photographs, but the word was spoken and the hour of fate had struck.

VII

TUESDAY arrived in due course, for good or ill. As the hour of five approached Moorlake was restless. He wanted to smoke, but would not, lest the atmosphere should be contaminated by the fumes of tobacco. He wished Mrs. North to find everything as fresh and charming as possible. He had arranged some flowers with his own hands; a row of small glasses full of violets stood on the high, carved mantelpiece and a cluster of long-stemmed pink roses made a delicious spot of color on the table. A fire of logs was crackling in a hearth of De Morgan tiles, diffusing a faint acrid perfume through the great room. There were red-shaded lamps burning; Moorlake hated electric light, and used it only in the adjoining room, where he worked. The so-called studio was really a combination of library and sitting-room, where he spent his leisure hours at home and occasionally entertained his friends.

To-day he was more nervous and expectant than he had been for years. He was surprised at his state of mind. He desired Mrs. North's presence, and yet dreaded it. He asked which

of the two warring personalities in his nature was to have the upper hand—the gentleman or the scoundrel.

He realized that what was outwardly a friendly, casual visit and an ordinary tea-drinking was perhaps to be the turning-point in his relations with Althea; and he swore to himself that he would say and do nothing that could render her more unhappy in the long run.

At a quarter to five the bell rang.

In a few moments the servant entered and asked if he would see Mrs. Hilyer.

Moorlake was intensely annoyed, but did not dare to refuse.

"Mrs. Hilyer knows that I'm at home?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the maid.

"Ask her to come up," he said.

Mrs. Hilyer entered almost directly. In the subdued light her small, pretty face looked pale—perhaps also because it stood out against a high collar of dark fur.

"Am I interrupting you?" she asked, holding out her hand.

"No," said Moorlake, with cold civility; "I seldom work after dark. Won't you sit down?" and he drew a chair toward the fire.

"Not yet—I want to look about first. What a room for a dance!—but you ought to have electric light."

"I don't care for dancing, you know."

"Perhaps your friends might!"

"I am not an altruistic person, I'm afraid."

"How selfish men are!"

Clarice was frozen by his manner—by the invulnerability of the armor in which she had never been able to find a crevice.

Moorlake was averse to rudeness, but he feared intensely to make her prolong her visit.

"How does the room compare with my Roman studio?" he asked, more pleasantly, while he strained his ears for the sound of wheels or the tinkle of a doorbell.

"It is very nice, as far as I can see in this dim, religious light. Ah, vio-

lets!" and she daintily sniffed the warm air. "I believe you are expecting someone to tea!"

"My mother sometimes has tea with me here," said Clement. "You know she lives with me." He could not help smiling at his own words.

Clarice laughed.

"How funny you are! And yet you haven't much sense of humor," she said.

"Perhaps that's why I am amusing to my friends," said he. "Yes, I suppose I'm a very dull, humdrum sort of person."

"You don't look it!" and Clarice fixed her penetrating eyes on his face. "You appear at this moment to be in a fever of expectation—or annoyance. Which is it? You have a beautiful red spot in the middle of each cheek. Never saw you with a color before. It makes you look years younger."

At any other time her impertinence would have entertained him, but just now, when his heart was in his ears, he had scarcely a thought for her.

"I will have pity on you," she went on, "and leave you. I came really to know whether you would dine with me to-morrow night and go to the play. I've got a box at the Lyceum."

"You are very kind," said Moorlake, "but I am engaged."

Clarice rose.

"Too bad!" she said, and at that moment the bell rang. "Ah! There comes the unknown she! I must fly! I'm afraid we shall meet in the hall!" and with a light laugh Mrs. Hilyer left the room, without further leave-taking.

Moorlake was intensely annoyed. Before he could collect his thoughts the maid announced Mrs. North. She came toward him in great trepidation.

"Oh, I'm so vexed!" she exclaimed, as he took her hand. "I ran against Mrs. Hilyer on the stairs. What will she think?"

"What could she think except that you kindly stepped in to see me, as she did?" said Clement, reassuringly. "You know quite well that if there were any harm in your coming here

I should not have invited you. I didn't like to tell my maid not to let in anyone but you; servants gossip so."

"And is she used to this sort of thing?—your having women to tea, I mean?" asked Althea, looking about her vaguely, not yet recovered from her perturbation.

"I don't have many," said Clement, smiling at the unconscious little note of jealousy in her question. "But there are enough visitors at the house to make your call quite ordinary."

"Not to you, I hope," said Althea, with a timid but bright smile.

He pressed her hand for an instant.

"Give me your cape, and take this chair," he said, taking her wrap from her.

"How pretty it is here! And the flowers—so fresh and sweet! Did you get them because of me?"

He could hardly bear the look in her eyes as she turned to him—an expression of pure worship and trust.

"How good and thoughtful you are to me!" she went on. "I never knew that men could be like that till I met you."

She was not in a condition of mind to weigh her words. Moorlake saw this, and had to fight down his own rising passion—a passion compounded more of pity than of love.

"How often must I tell you that I'm no better than other men?" he said, gently.

"You can't make me believe it!" she said. "You're the first man who has ever brought me any happiness."

Her sweet face was turned toward him in the firelight, her eager, shining eyes were fixed on his.

"Any man who could knowingly make you unhappy can't be worth much!" said he, impulsively, forgetting that he was condemning her husband.

Just then the maid entered with tea, and the conversation became, perforce, conventional. When she had left the room Althea said: "I made up my mind not to tell you my troubles to-day. I want to rest here, and forget."

"Would it make you happier to tell them? Could I help you?" he asked. "I have known since our first meeting that you were unhappy, but you have never told me why."

"But you know! you feel! You've seen me with Oliver; how could you not know?" she said. "I don't know how I can bear my life. I don't want to be disloyal, though the time for loyalty seems gone. He has thrown me away."

"Poor man!" said Moorlake.

"You pity him?" asked Althea, amazed.

"I pity any man, however unworthy, who has lost your love."

Althea flushed deeply.

"He never had my love!—such love as I am capable of now. Listen. Let me tell you the truth—a part of the truth. I've come to-day because I couldn't help it. I wanted so much to see you alone—away from the shams of society, away from the jealous espionage of the man who grudges me even my friendships. I've got to the point where I can't go on without support. The struggle is awful. You've seen me with him—you know. It's sinful for me to live with him any longer. Even for the sake of the child I can't. I hate the sound of his voice—the touch of his hand. I must get free. I shall go mad if I don't!"

She was trembling with violent emotion. Moorlake was scarcely less stirred. He took her hand in both his own and bent over her. "Althea!" he said. "My heart aches for you!"

She went on, wildly: "He has crushed me gradually, year after year. He has killed my spirit—stolen my youth—broken my heart! My life is dust and ashes. People call him a good man; so he is, without a vice—only the vices of the slave driver and the torturer. I clung to him for years, and he has unclasped my fingers one by one! If he would strike me I could leave him; if he were unfaithful I should be free to live my own life. But he is only cruel—cruel."

She broke down utterly now and wept.

Moorlake knelt beside her and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"My dear, my dear!" he said, his voice vibrating with feeling, "I can't watch you cry like this!"

For a few moments she clung to him silently, while her sobs moderated. Her face was buried in her hands. His touch seemed an anodyne for all suffering.

"Forgive me," she said, weakly; "I'm so unstrung." She reached out one hand and laid it lightly on the side of his face.

His heart throbbed wildly.

"I long to take you in my arms and shield you against the world!" he said, very low. "But the shield would be but a target to invite the arrows of the world!"

He was holding himself back with the full force of his strong will. Her instinctive caress had shaken him sorely.

"I know—I know," she said. "But there is still friendship. You have said that there is no middle course, but that is not so. I can't hide from you how much you are to me; I don't feel any shame—why should I be ashamed to love what is high and noble? I never dreamed that you could care for me much, but I *know* you are my friend. Aren't you? You like me?"

She was not touching him now, but her eyes were probing his own.

"My dear," he answered, "I like you only too well."

"Then we can have a friendship," she said, triumphantly—"a beautiful secret compact—a bond too sacred to be made known to any but ourselves. I will make our love so high and pure and stainless that God himself could not chide us for it. Isn't it possible?"

"A dream, dear child," he said, sadly—"a beautiful dream."

"Only a dream?" she answered, eagerly. "You hinted once that there had been for years a woman in your life—a love that made all other love impossible. I don't ask to know where she is—whether she be alive

or dead; I ask only the second place. To be second in your heart would be happiness enough for me. Ah, do you despise me? Am I unwomanly?"

"Despise you?" he cried. "Despise you, my child? Is it nothing that such a woman as you cares for me? Is it nothing that you awaken feelings that I thought were dead? I can't have your beautiful friendship; I've told you, warned you, that you mustn't trust me. I should only injure you—make your life harder than it is, believe me."

She hid her face once more.

"You *do* despise me," she said, chokingly; "you *do*!"

"So little," he answered, "that I wish to God I were a different man and you a free woman. Two things hold us apart, the power of the past and my affection for you. I can't offer you anything that won't be an insult to you."

She looked up with a white face.

"Ah," she said, "you don't love me!"

"I care so much for you," he said, "that I won't sacrifice you."

"You don't understand me yet," Althea protested. "You won't understand me. I swear that I want to be your friend—to see you sometimes—to have in my heart the knowledge that one man cares for me—that I care for and believe in one man."

"I do understand you," he said, sadly. "I recognize your purity, and I realize that I am—a man."

"But such a man!" she said; "so much higher and nobler—"

"An ordinary man," said Moorlake, "who tries not to be a blackguard. It isn't always easy. Don't think it's easy."

She looked at his pale, stern face.

"Oh, I love you for it!" she cried. There was a kind of radiance in her regard. "I'm not ashamed; I'm proud that I love the best man I've ever known."

She turned away from him and walked toward the dim end of the room.

He stood by the fire, looking blind-

ly down at the flames. His mind was in a whirl.

In a few moments Althea returned and stood beside him. They faced each other.

"So this is the end?" she said, quietly.

"Of what?" he asked, knowing her meaning, yet wishing to gain time.

"Of our friendship—our love—what you please to call it," she replied.

"I know no other course," he said.

She did not know what the answer cost him.

"We shall never meet again? I have spoiled it all—all the hope I had," she said, wearily.

"For a time—for a time," he murmured. "Let us not meet for a little while."

"It must be so, if you say it. Will you kiss me once, Clement—for good-bye?"

His breast heaved. He was less calm than she, for she was learning what despair means.

He took her in his arms; she raised her mouth to his.

And at that moment the door opened, and Oliver North stood on the threshold.

VIII

For several seconds no one spoke.

Althea clung to Moorlake's arm, and after the first involuntary cringe faced her husband boldly. North's face was white in the dim light, and set in an expression of restrained fury.

"So," he said, presently, "she was right. You are here with your lover!"

"He is not my lover," said Althea, in a weak voice. She was trembling, but she did not flinch.

"That is for him to explain to me," said North, with a black scowl. He made a step nearer. Althea threw herself before Moorlake.

"Don't touch him! Don't dare!" she cried. "He's too good for you to touch!" Then she turned to Clement.

"Leave me with him; he shall hear the truth from me."

"I can't leave you," said Moorlake. "Let me speak to your husband." His whole anxiety seemed for her—not for anything that might happen to himself.

"I implore you!" she said, and pointed to the door.

Moorlake turned to North. "I will come back when you want me," he said.

North's eyes were fixed on Althea.

"My business is with her. Time enough to settle with you," he answered. He glanced at Clement as he left the room, then turned on his wife with a face fearful in its bitter anger.

"Well," he said, "you shameless woman, what have you to say? How long have you been deceiving me with this scoundrel?"

Althea, though blanched, gathered firmness every moment.

"I deceived you!" she said. "I have treated you like a gentleman when you were insulting me with every breath! I have stayed quietly in your house while you made my home a hell; but from this moment I'll deceive you no longer—I hate you! I hate you! You have done all you could to drive me to dishonor; but I am innocent. Clement Moorlake is a man to die for—but he doesn't love me. Why should he? But I'm not ashamed of loving him—and I do—I do! Wouldn't any poor, crushed, broken-hearted woman love the best man she's ever known?" She paused a moment, panting.

"You confess to me that you love him?" cried North, with concentrated rage, "and you say he isn't your lover? A likely story! Does an innocent woman go to a man's rooms alone and kiss him? You ask me to believe that?"

"I asked him to kiss me—because we were never to meet again," said Althea. "Would to God he did love me—but he doesn't."

North snarled inarticulately and half-raised his arm.

"Strike me," she said, "and make

me free of you forever! But I tell you, if you hurt Clement I'll kill you—kill you with my naked hands."

"You a decent woman?" he cried. "You're low and vile! If you're not his mistress you ought to be! Stay here till you make him love you! I wouldn't soil my hands with either of you. There are other ways of punishing a woman like you." He seized her by the shoulders, dashed her to the floor and strode from the room.

Moorlake was in the inner room. He heard the fall, and hurried to Althea's assistance. By that time the frenzied North had left the house, banging the door behind him.

Althea's head had struck against the table, and she was half-stunned.

Moorlake knelt and raised her head till it rested on his arm. There were signs of returning consciousness, and at that moment Mrs. Moorlake entered. The stately old lady, white-haired and with eyes like Clement's, stood looking at her son and Althea with a startled gaze.

"What is this, Clement? Who is it?" she asked, sternly.

"Mrs. North is ill, mother. Will you ring for your maid, please?" said Moorlake, softly.

Althea's eyelids fluttered, and she feebly raised her hand to her head.

"Oh!" she murmured, "we are not alone. Let me get up."

"Are you able?" asked Clement. "Perhaps, mother, you would better not ring. Mrs. North is recovering."

Althea got up slowly, swaying slightly as she regained her feet.

"I must go," she said, faintly. All her force was gone.

"Will you take my carriage?" asked Mrs. Moorlake, stiffly. "It is waiting still."

"Thank you, I will go home. Oh!" she wailed, suddenly, "I have no home."

Mrs. Moorlake looked shocked and surprised.

"You are ill," she said. "Let me send my maid with you."

"I will take Mrs. North," said Moorlake, firmly. He placed Althea's cape about her shoulders. "I will

take you to Mrs. Vincent's," he said to her in a low tone; "but you must first have a glass of wine." He made her sit down. "Perhaps I'd better fetch the wine myself. You will stay here, mother," he said. "I will see that Mrs. North reaches home safely."

He was gone only a minute or two. Mrs. Moorlake said nothing; she saw that Althea was dazed and unequal to conversation. Clement returned with a glass of port. Althea drank it submissively, and revived a little. He led her from the room and down the stairs like a child. The hall was empty, and they got into the carriage without being seen by anyone but the coachman.

"Lean on me, dear," he said, gently, and she put her head against his shoulder.

Her mind was torpid. Everything seemed wrapped in a haze. She knew that she was touching Clement—that he was supporting her, as a father might. The contact gave her no thrill—only a dull sense that she was being cared for, and that he was a tower of strength. They reached Campden Hill in silence. He left her in the carriage and went in to prepare Nellie Vincent. She was just going up stairs to dress for dinner, but greeted him with her usual cordiality.

"Mrs. North is in the carriage," he said; "she needs you very much. There has been a terrible scene with North—she has had a blow, and can't talk much. You'll be good to her, won't you?" He said this holding Nellie's hand. She had never seen him so white and agitated.

"Clement! tell me more. What does this mean?" she cried.

"Much to both of us, I fear," he answered. "She will tell you when she is better; but we must not keep her waiting."

Together they went out to the carriage and brought Althea in.

IX

ON some nervous temperaments a sudden shock produces a succeeding torpor of body and brain. When Al-

thea found herself in her friend's boudoir her one desire was to sleep. She had no other craving left. Nothing seemed to matter. The great crisis of her life, through which she had just passed, had little significance for her. She had let Moorlake go without a word; she had not even thanked him.

"Let me sleep, Nellie," she said, when Mrs. Vincent questioned her. "Something awful has happened—Oliver—Clement—it's all confused. Don't ask me till to-morrow."

Nellie had the sense to see that she must not try to learn anything tonight. She herself helped Althea to undress, induced her to drink a cup of tea, and got her into bed. She lighted the fire already laid, then, returning to her own room, rang for the house-maid and explained that Mrs. North had been taken ill while calling, and must not be disturbed.

Nellie's own confidential maid had fetched the tea, and could be trusted not to gossip in the servants' hall.

Nellie had barely time to slip on a tea gown when dinner was announced. Bertram Vincent was waiting for her when she entered the drawing-room. He stood before the fire, whistling blithely to himself.

"Bertie," said Nellie, coming quickly toward him, "something awful has happened," and in a few words she told all she knew.

Vincent whistled again, this time with a changed note.

"Clement!" he exclaimed. "Well, I'm blown!"

"Yes, Clement! of all people!" said Nellie. "Come; we must behave as usual."

"After all, it's our servants who keep us straight," said Bertie, with a sudden smile. It tickled his sense of humor that he and his wife must talk commonplace, and eat clear soup while poor, ruined, sick-hearted Althea lay in a half-stupor up stairs—and meanwhile the demure parlor-maid, under her spotless cap with streamers, held the distinct impression of the bruise she had seen on Mrs. North's face.

At last dessert came, and the maid departed. Wild with impatience, Nellie jumped up.

"Parkins is on guard, Bertie; she won't let the others in. But I'm going up. Oh, poor Althea! What do you think it is?"

"An infernal muddle, no doubt. Why did Althea go to Clement's alone?"

"Why, many people do. I do."

"I know, but that's different. We've known Moorlake twenty years, and then, I am not Oliver North."

"No, thank God!"

Bertie reflected for a moment.

"Will they fight, do you think?" asked Nellie. "Do men have duels in England?"

"More likely, if there's anything in it, North will shoot 'em both!" said Bertie. "Do you remember that unfortunate dinner last Summer, when they met? It was in this very room that Oliver gave vent to his opinion on faithless wives. He won't give much quarter, I expect."

Nellie was half-crying.

"Whatever she's done it's his fault—the brute!" she said, vehemently.

"But Moorlake, of all men!" said Vincent, wonderingly, as his wife left him.

The night seemed short to Althea. Her sleep was deep and dreamless. When she woke the dim Winter light barely made the room visible. She looked idly at the bed curtains, noted the pattern, and realized that they were not her own. By the time she sat up and looked at the other objects in the room, Nellie, who had slept on the sofa all night, entered fresh from her bath and morning coffee.

"Well, dearest," she said, trying to keep her voice steady, "you've had a splendid sleep! You must be hungry. You shall have breakfast at once. How do you feel, love?"

"My head aches a little," said Althea. "I think I am rather hungry." Then, with sudden excitement, "Nellie, why am I here?"

"You were ill, dear—and Clement

—that is—I—you were so tired—” Nellie came to a standstill.

A wave of recollection broke over Althea.

“Oh, Nellie! Nellie! I remember! Clement! Is he safe? Where is he? Where is Oliver?” She clasped her hands tightly and fixed imploring eyes on her friend.

“Safe? Of course. Why not?” said Nellie. “He’s big enough to take care of himself, isn’t he, dear?”

The tragedy in Althea’s face frightened her into an attempt at playfulness.

“You don’t know,” said Althea. “I was stupid last night—I hurt my face—or head—when Oliver threw me down.”

She began to cry weakly.

“My dear,” implored Nellie, her own eyes wet, “you mustn’t! Lie down. Be good, love. Let me bring you some breakfast. Sarah will make a fire, and your own Nellie, who loves you, will take care of you. Don’t, don’t, that’s a love!”

The childless woman crooned over her like a mother with a baby.

She was quieted for the time.

The blazing coals were comforting and cheering, and made one forget the yellow day outside. Nature asserted herself, and Althea was really glad to eat and drink. Life looks so different after breakfast! She was then able to tell Mrs. Vincent all. When the story was ended, Nellie sat beside the bed, silent.

“Do you hate me, Nell, for being so wicked?” asked Althea, timidly.

“I hate Oliver!” said Nellie. “No one else. But I think Moorlake should not have let it come to this.”

“Oh, it wasn’t his fault! He is the best—the—”

“I know—I know. They always are! I’ve known Moorlake twenty years, and I thought him the only sensible *attractive* man of my acquaintance—it’s easy for the other kind to be sensible. I’m disappointed in him.”

Althea shook her head on the pillow.

“You’ve known him twenty years,

but you don’t know him as I do,” she said.

“Possibly not just that way,” said Nellie, drily. Then, presently: “Althea, does he love you?”

Althea winced piteously.

“Not as I do him,” she said.

“There was that other woman—” began Nellie.

Althea raised her hand.

“Don’t tell me!” she cried. “If he wants me to know he’ll tell me himself!”

“I can’t tell you, for I don’t know anything. Clement’s as close as wax. I only know that it’s generally understood that he has loved one woman all his life. She may be dead—I don’t know.”

There was a short silence. The firelight flickered cosily on the rose-pink walls and the flowery hangings. Both women were deep in thought.

“Nellie,” said Althea, presently, “will Oliver try to kill me—or Clementent?”

“I sha’n’t let him kill you, dear!” said Nellie. “Moorlake must defend himself.”

“It would be awful to die so—” Althea shuddered a little—“and for such a little sin!”

“It would be a large price to pay for one kiss,” said Nellie, cynically. “Well, well, we must think what’s to be done. Bertie had better go to your house. He can manage Oliver.”

“Oh, Nellie, my child! my poor baby! How wicked I am! Isn’t it terrible that I’ve loved *him* so much that I’ve almost forgotten Violet! Oh, Nellie!” and she began to cry afresh.

When she was once more soothed Mrs. Vincent left her and went to confer with Bertie.

“You must go at once to the Norths!” she said. “You’ll be able to find out what sort of mood Oliver is in, and see how Violet is, too. Althea is fretting about her.”

Bertie made a small grimace.

“Pleasant mission for a fellow who hates scenes!” he said; but he went.

When Nellie returned to her friend she found her with a new idea.

"Something has flashed across me!" she exclaimed. "When Oliver came in yesterday he said: 'She was right! You *are* with your lover!' Now, 'she' must be Clarice Hilyer. I forgot to tell you that I met her in the hall."

Nellie Vincent threw up her hands.

"Good Lord! Then you *are* lost!" she cried. "That woman will hound you to destruction. Why, she's been after Moorlake for years. Oh, Althea, you silly baby, *why* did you go there?"

"Because I was mad," said Mrs. North, gloomily.

When Bertram Vincent arrived in Pont street he was met by a solemn-faced maid at the door.

"Is Mr. North at home, Alice?" he asked. He knew her well.

"No, sir."

"Miss Violet, then?"

"No, sir."

"I came to tell you where Mrs. North is; I thought you might be worried about her. She was taken faint yesterday while driving on Campden Hill—came to us, and Mrs. Vincent is taking good care of her."

Alice's calm broke up.

"Come in, sir, please," she said, with a sob. "There's no good in keepin' the truth from you, sir, you as knows us all so well, sir. Mr. North's gone—that's the truth; went off last night, ragin'-like, and—and he's taken Miss Violet."

"Taken Miss Violet!" cried Vincent, aghast. "Where to, in heaven's name?"

"That's what we don't know, sir. And he's gone without nurse, and the poor woman is near crazy. He come in about six o'clock yesterday like a wild man. 'Send cook to me,' says he, 'and tell nurse to get Miss Violet ready to travel—to pack her clothes as fast as she can.' 'For 'ow long, sir?' I says, very respectful—for he was glarin'. 'A year,' says he—'two years! Pack all her things, and be quick!' Cook come up all in a tremble. She told me he said to mind everything while he was away,

till she heard from him, and he gave her a cheque for forty pounds for expenses, which looks bad, master being so close-fisted in general. 'And will the mistress be back, sir?' asks cook. 'Never!' says master, in an awful voice. 'She's dead,' says he. 'Oh, poor, dear lady!' cries cook. We all loves Mrs. North, y' know, sir. 'How did she die?' says cook. 'She killed herself—and me,' he says, wild-like. Well, you know, sir, that couldn't be true, because Mr. North wasn't a bit dead himself, only stormin' around cruel. So we plucked up spirit, sir, and—and—here we are," she ended, lamely.

These were the tidings that Vincent had to carry back to Campden Hill.

X

THE next day Moorlake called at the Vincents' to inquire for Althea. Nellie came to ask if she would like to see him.

Althea was sitting huddled up in a great chair before the morning-room fire. She had scarcely stirred or spoken all day. At the mention of Clement's name a wave of color swept over her face.

"No, no! I can't see him!" she said.

"You will have to see him sooner or later," said Nellie. "He will come again and again until you do. Why not now?"

"I can't," said Althea, and that was all she would say. As soon, however, as Nellie left the room she was in a fever. Oh, to see him—just a glimpse! Oh, to hear him—one tone of his voice!

The apathy of the past few hours changed to a consuming hunger for his presence. Yet, she thought, of what use was his coming? If he had not loved her before he would despise her now—when she had led him into a position so hateful to a man of honor. He had never loved her—she knew that; only felt a great pity, a great kindness, a great regret that so

much love should have been given unsought, undesired. Some men would have played with the passion; would have extracted thrills and sensations from it, while their souls held aloof. She thanked God that Moorlake was better than that, and she realized, amid the pangs of a most human craving, that it was better to preserve one's ideal than to have a surfeit of mock love.

The knowledge that he was so near, yet invisible, inaudible to her made her long to go to him. But the awe in which she held him—now more than ever—kept her where she was, and would not let her go.

In a little while, though the time seemed long, Nellie Vincent returned to the morning-room. She sat down by Althea, seeing the eager question of her eyes.

"He is very sad, very troubled, Althea," she said. "He did not say much—only asked about you, whether you had any plans, and how you were."

"Did you say anything about Violet?" asked Althea, in a weak voice.

"Bertie told him. He was awfully shocked."

"Did he speak of seeing me?"

"He only said, 'If I can be of any use, let me know.'"

"And how did he look?"

"Pale—and older."

"Oh, Clement! Clement!" Althea covered her face with her hands.

"I who would die for him have brought him only trouble."

Nellie did not answer; she only held her friend's hand and patted it.

Her mind was fixed on the near future, and the prospect was a disquieting one. How was Althea to regain her child? How was a scandal to be averted? Sooner or later something must transpire. It was likely that Clarice Hilyer would be glad to injure the woman of whom she had suddenly become jealous. Besides all this, Althea's financial position was insecure. She had now but a trifle to live on, as evidently part of Oliver's scheme of revenge was to leave her without means of support.

"It would have been kinder to shoot her," said Nellie to Bertie next day.

"I can't see what she's to do," admitted Bertie. "I saw Ballard, the American lawyer, this morning. He tells me that Althea can't get the child unless she could get someone to steal it, and we don't even know where it is. Who knows what North is doing? He may be getting a divorce—or rather, he may do so when he arrives, for I suppose he is gone to America."

"How can he do that? He has no grounds," said Nellie.

"You don't know American law, my dear," answered Vincent. "Ballard tells me that a man can go to Dakota, live there ninety days, start divorce proceedings of which his wife is perfectly ignorant; the case 'goes by default,' as they call it, and the wife has papers served on her simply informing her that she's divorced. That may happen to Althea."

"Heavens, what a wicked law!" cried Nellie. "And could Clement marry her?"

"That I'm not quite certain of. Ballard left me before we got to that. Do you think Clement wants to marry her?"

Nellie was silent for a moment. Then she said: "I think he would feel it his duty."

"Althea wouldn't take him on those terms. She's too proud," said Bertie.

"My dear," said Nellie, "when a woman worships a man as Althea worships Moorlake, she takes him on any terms—especially if they're respectable ones."

"Well," said Bertie, "we shall see. . . ."

No one besides the Vincents and Moorlake could account for North's sudden absence—except Clarice Hilyer, who had made the mischief. She needed all her coolness when she thought of meeting Moorlake, as she might do any day. She found herself afraid to pass his door; every day she stood on her doorstep before going out, nervously looking up and down Cheyne Walk, dreading to see his tall

figure. She knew that to inflict further injury on Althea North would be to lose Clement even as an acquaintance, and she preserved an unbroken silence. She never did harm to any woman unless that woman stood in her way; and even then her hatred was impersonal and calm, scarcely deserving the name of a passion.

Mrs. Moorlake understood her son's temper and character too well to question him in regard to the scene in the studio. Clement was a man who scrupulously guarded his individual rights of thought and action. His mother's unyielding dignity had been reproduced in him. He gave no one the right to question him, and she had always respected his reticence. In so doing she made it possible for them to live together in harmony. Mrs. Moorlake had never before entered his studio without an invitation, and she blamed herself for having done so on this occasion.

As for Clement, he found the work of years undone in an instant. He had strenuously—perhaps priggishly—protected himself against the charm of women, only to find himself in the odious position of a man accused of a sin he has not committed—branded as a seducer, while he has almost attained to the renunciation of a saint. The temptation had been a fiery one, and he had come through it morally unscathed; yet here he was, responsible for a woman's ruin. What though that ruin was imaginary? It was real enough in the sense that her husband believed in it, and had left her in jealous fury. She was now dependent on three persons—the Vincents and himself—and of these three he was the only one who was morally responsible. His one poor, abortive, brotherly kiss had ended worse than the fiercest embrace. He would have found something ludicrous in the case had he not been the hero of it. His quickened fancy pictured the cheerless drama that might follow. He saw himself, for the rest of his life, charged with the fate of Althea North. She was pretty, she was charming; she loved him, but—yes, that was it

—she loved him too much. It was an entire reversal of the proper order of things. His fine taste was offended by it. Now that he was away from Althea he felt astonishingly cold. There was none of the warmth that her sweetness and pretty, pleading ways evoked in him when they were together. He had been inexpressibly relieved when she refused to see him. He commended her discretion—a quality not always displayed by women who are madly in love. Yet he knew that the meeting must come, and the thought of it sat on him like a nightmare. One side of his nature hated the other. He wanted to love Althea. Tepid affection wasn't enough; pity, and the kindness which every chivalrous man feels toward a nice woman, were not enough. He longed to rouse some emotion, some enthusiasm, in himself. His nature was like his face, where the cold, pure Grecian outlines were contradicted by the fire of the eyes; and at present the coldness had it all its own way.

Meanwhile, Althea stayed on with the Vincents. She went to Pont street one day to get her clothes and various belongings that she needed. The servants looked at her in an awestruck way, but they seemed full of affection for her and of stifled indignation toward Oliver. North's solicitor, Alice, the parlormaid, said, had called two days before and had put the household on a different footing. All the maids but Alice and the cook had been paid a month's wages and sent away. The other two were ordered to remain on board wages until further instructions should be received. The drawing-room was dismantled, and its sheeted forms gave Althea a shock. The house was full of memories—most of them miserable ones. Violet's bedroom was more than she could bear. It brought back the hours that mother and child had spent together—the hours always the most satisfactory in a mother's life. Althea had thought then that she knew what maternal love was, but the throbbing wave of affection that swelled over her now as she looked at

the vacant crib made her past feelings seem lukewarm and feeble by comparison.

She kept down her sobs while she selected such garments as she needed and superintended the packing of them. One of the dresses was the pale mauve satin she had worn on the occasion of her first meeting with Moorlake—the meeting that was destined to alter her life. She scarcely knew whether she loved or hated it. She remembered how she had never had enough clothes. She had gone to America the wife of a comparatively rich man, and had felt herself shabby and ashamed before her old friends. Each garment had some painful association; her life with Oliver had had little happiness.

She got away from the house of ghosts as soon as she could and drove back to Campden Hill. All the way she was occupied with wondering how she was to live—whether she could not force Oliver to make some provision for her. The Vincents loved her, and she was devoted to them, but she could not live her whole life with them. She felt a consuming desire to get away from London, to know that there was no chance of seeing Clement—the one person whom she longed for—and dreaded. When she reached the Vincents' she went at once into the morning-room. The afternoon was gray and cheerless, darkening into evening. Even the glowing fire and the flowers, of which the vases were full, could not make the room bright. She stood looking about for Nellie, and saw Clement Moorlake standing by the window. The shock stopped her heart, then sent it bounding. Moorlake looked so tall and pale and grave that he somehow overpowered her. She did not even stretch out her hand to him; she stood looking at him with wide eyes. It was Clement that spoke.

"I was waiting for Mrs. Vincent," he said, "but I am glad to have this opportunity of seeing you."

He realized that he was priggish and stilted—that he had said the wrong thing.

"I will tell Nellie," said Althea, mechanically, and moved toward the door.

Moorlake came a step nearer.

"No, no—don't, please. I want to see you."

Althea returned to the fire, and stood taking off her gloves. She could not keep her hands still.

"I cannot blame you," she said, "if you want never to see me again."

That was also the wrong thing to say, she thought. She should have kept the appealing tone out of her voice.

"That is impossible!" said Clement. He was fighting down his distaste for the situation—trying to warm over his sympathy, that had grown cold. "I want so much to tell you—" He paused. What *did* he want to tell her? He was distinctly conscious that he wished to tell her nothing. Meanwhile she stood opposite him, with white, pathetic face. She had put down her gloves, and now drew the pins from her hat, and laid that aside. Then she smoothed the heavy masses of chestnut hair that had fallen over her ears.

Why couldn't he love her? Why couldn't he take her into his arms and comfort her? It seemed to him nobler now to pretend than to freeze the poor creature by an exhibition of the truth. Yet something held him back.

Althea found words before he could go on.

"I want to tell you, Mr. Moorlake," she said, "what an agony of remorse I've suffered for having brought you to this. I understand your position; don't think I imagine—anything that is not so. You must not trouble about me. I have good friends who will do all they can for me."

In that moment he admired her. Some of the ice melted.

"Dear Mrs. North," he said, leaning toward her, "I want you to feel that I am your friend, though I have so far brought only unhappiness into your life. I have no words to express how I regret this. If I can help you in any way—" he paused, again at a loss.

Neither was sorry that Nellie Vincent at that moment opened the door and ended the abortive interview. When she saw Althea she started back, then hastily decided to behave naturally.

"I've kept you waiting, Clement," she said, "but I was helping Bertie in the studio."

Althea took up her hat and gloves. "Good-bye," she said, turning to Moorlake, then quietly left the room.

Nellie looked after her, then at Moorlake.

"Can you say nothing—do nothing?" she demanded. "That poor thing will go mad."

Moorlake's face became set and haughty, and his thin nostrils quivered.

"You needn't look like that, Clement," said Nellie. "I've known you twenty years, and I'm one of the women you can't intimidate. I'm as sorry for you as I can be, but Althea didn't get into this miserable mess all alone, and she's got to be helped. I'm always on the side of the women, you know. We're handicapped from the cradle to the grave."

Moorlake almost smiled at this outburst. He was very fond of Mrs. Vincent.

"My dear Nellie," he said, "I don't know how I looked at you—I only know how I feel, and nobody need envy me."

"Let me know how you feel, please," said Nellie. "You see, we're all accustomed to look on you as something holy and remote—something on a marble pedestal. We've always expected you to do the right thing, and you've always done it, so far as we know. Now, all of a sudden, you've stepped down, and I naturally feel anxious to hear what you think about it. I can't think it's no business of mine. I love Althea North—she is my best friend—and at present I see ruin ahead of her—ruin without any compensation, apparently—that is, if you don't love her."

Moorlake was making a heroic effort to conquer his repugnance to personal conversation. It was indeed

difficult to preserve the haughty pose with Nellie, the friend of his boyhood. Their relations had always been those cordial, unemotional ones that alone endure between women and men.

When he answered her his face wore an expression of unaffected kindness.

"I feel Mrs. North's position most keenly," he said. "It seems disloyal to be discussing her behind her back. I'm sure, if she ever felt any admiration for me she must have lost it by now. I was a brute to her just now!"

"I was afraid of it!" cried Nellie. "Her poor face made me shiver, it was so wan and white! Do you know what you ought to have done? You should have simply taken her into your arms and told her you love her. I don't care whether you do or not. A lie like that will save a woman's reason sometimes. I'm not speaking in the interest of morality now. My heart simply bleeds for that girl. I've never entangled myself with any man—but then, mind you, *I* was never married to Oliver North!"

Moorlake regarded her with deep interest.

"You're a good woman, Nellie," he said, "and I'm a cold brute."

"Ah, my dear, the cold brutes are worse than the other kind when it comes to this. Here is this woman torturing herself, thinking she has lost your respect, as well as everything else, and you come and patronize her in a polite morning call . . . Oh, it's too much; I'm ashamed of you!"

Moorlake took his castigation meekly.

"Last time you met," Nellie went on, "she was in your arms. This time I dare say you didn't even shake hands with her. Oh, you men! I know your Spanish hidalgo airs—without any Spanish warmth behind them! I'm glad enough *I* was never in love with you!"

"Don't spare me," said Moorlake, a faint flicker of amusement crossing his face. "You do me good. But come, now, granted that I'm a brute, a statue, a Spanish hidalgo—all these conflicting epithets—what do you

think I ought to do? Let us be practical."

"I think," said Nellie, "that you ought to bolster up her self-respect. Don't keep on telling her you don't love her—that you kissed her because you were sorry for her. I'm sure you *did* tell her that—you look so guilty."

Moorlake smiled.

"I don't feel like laughing," he said, "but you are really very funny."

"I am seriously anxious about Althea's health. She is ill now—all the result of a few days' misery. How is she to live if she thinks you don't care for her? You must love her a little—now, don't you? Come, do tell me! Keep your offish ways for people who haven't known you for twenty years. I've never, in all that time, asked you an indiscreet question. Do answer just this one!"

"Nellie, there's no resisting you," said Moorlake. His hazel eyes looked very human—at last. "I hate talking about my feelings—I always have hated it; but you have a sort of right to know them now. I do—and I do not—love Althea. She attracts me, of course; I'm not the statue you think me; I care for her, in a way; I have great respect for her, for she is pure and good, and I pity her immensely because she is unfortunate and unhappy. But what *I* call love—the thing that means *me*—every part of me, physical, mental, spiritual—I can't offer her. I've offered it to nobody for fifteen years."

There was a long pause. Presently Nellie Vincent said, gravely:

"Thank you, Clement. I understand. It sounds like Althea's death-knell. There is one thing more I *must* ask you. Has it ever occurred to you that Oliver North may be gone to get a divorce?"

"Of course not," said Clement, calmly. "He couldn't possibly get one."

"Don't be too sure. Bertie tells me that in Dakota you can get a divorce for anything or nothing; and in that case—"

Clement flushed deeply.

"Yes," he said, "in that case—?"

"Althea would be free," said Nellie, very low, with averted eyes.

There was an electric silence.

Mrs. Vincent dreaded the first word; she feared that she had gone too far. Clement rose before he spoke.

"It is useless to speculate about all this," he said. "When the contingencies arise they must be faced. Until then—" He hesitated, holding out his hand.

"We're friends still, aren't we, Clement?" asked Nellie, looking up at him.

"Friends always, Nellie," he answered. "Good-bye."

XI

AFTER her encounter with Moorlake Althea broke down entirely. She went to bed early that evening, and did not get up for two weeks. There was no disease; she simply lay there, growing thinner, weaker, more lethargic. It didn't seem worth while to get up and dress. She would have forgotten to eat if Nellie had not insisted on her taking food. Moorlake was kept informed of her condition, but there was no communication between them. He was never out of Althea's mind, waking or sleeping, yet such was her languor that she felt no desire to see him again. He had become a beautiful abstraction. The Vincents were seriously alarmed. For the first fortnight they hesitated to consult a physician, but at last, when they realized that Althea was fading away, they sent for their own doctor.

Jim Burton—all his friends called him Jim—was only forty years old. He was a man of almost colossal size, with the skin of an infant and the smile of a cherub. Before he had talked five minutes to a patient the sufferer felt on the high road to recovery, and his charming buoyancy and hopefulness made him beloved by even comparative strangers, while his friends doted on him.

Of course, it was necessary to con-

fide in him to a certain extent. In any case, he would have known, after a glance at Mrs. North, that she was suffering from mental shock. Nellie took him in one day without warning Althea. She looked at him with eyes void of surprise, and listlessly greeted him; they had often met in society. Burton sat down and began talking of nearly everything except illness. Althea was soon languidly smiling. Burton described a first night at a leading theatre, where he had been the evening before.

The smile broadened, and in a quarter of an hour Althea was taking the trouble to talk a little. Nellie glowed approvingly in the background. Not a word was said about health, till, just as Burton was leaving, he casually felt Althea's pulse. It was so feeble that it shocked him, though the cherubic face never changed.

"I suspect you are not eating enough," he observed. "You're inclined to be anaemic, you know; you must eat."

Althea made a little face.

"She's awfully bad about that, Jim," said Nellie. "It takes me half an hour to make her take a cup of soup."

"She doesn't want soup; give her chops and steaks and whiskey-and-soda. Take her out driving to-morrow, if it's a decent morning," and the doctor departed, leaving a light and warmth in the spiritual atmosphere which had not been there when he came.

That afternoon Moorlake gave way to a sudden impulse—one that an American would have had long before. He was passing a flower shop, and instantly resolved to send some violets and roses to Althea. He ordered the young woman in the shop to unbind one of the great, flat, jammed-together bouquets of violets, liberating the poor little blossoms and removing the bundle of straws around which, for unknown reasons, the stems are gathered; the result was a lovely, fragrant, loose bunch surrounded by leaves. This, with a

handful of tea roses, he ordered to be sent to Campden Hill. On his card he wrote, "So grieved that you are ill;" then, after a moment's reflection, added "Clement."

To him that addition of his Christian name meant a great deal; he supposed it would mean much to her also. It seemed a sort of acknowledgment that their intimacy had not yet snapped in two—a declaration that he meant to stand by her.

The box was carried to Althea's bed. When Nellie came in to have tea with her, she found her lying with her face covered with roses and violets.

Mrs. Vincent brushed the flowers aside and looked into her eyes. The soul had come back to them.

"Clement?" asked Nellie.

"Yes," breathed Althea, softly, and held out the little card, crushed and warm from lying in her hand.

"You've been kissing it!" said Nellie, banteringly, while tears stood in her eyes. "Oh, men, men! they hold us as you do that card—to kiss or to crush us, as the fancy takes them! What a pity it should be so!"

Althea's face beamed.

"I didn't know he cared," said Althea.

Next day she was a changed woman, and went for a drive.

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that the world was standing still. Women were gossiping over their teacups, as usual, and the North scandal was being pretty generally discussed. Its vagueness made it the more piquant. How do these things become known?

In the first place, Moorlake's servant had heard North run from the house and bang the door behind him. Then the coachman had seen Clement supporting Althea and almost lifting her into the carriage.

Next, the Vincents' parlormaid had observed the bruise on Althea's forehead. The Norths' servants were but human, and they had many friends in neighboring establishments. From the servants' hall to the drawing-room is but the distance of two flights of stairs, and news sails

like thistledown through the air. Before long it became known that the North household was broken up and that Mrs. North had taken refuge with the Vincents.

It was an anxious time for Clarice Hilyer. It was the first serious mistake of her life—from her point of view—when she told Oliver North that his wife was in Moorlake's studio. She dared contribute nothing to the surmises of the tea-drinkers, yet her very silence was taken to mean that she could, if she would, enlighten them. Thus she became in some wise involved in the mystery.

Althea's reputation had been so perfect that nothing was said against her. Her husband's meanness and neglect had been an open secret, and she had won everybody's respect by her silent endurance of his caprices. It was scarcely known among her friends that she had seen anything of Moorlake; for that reason he hoped intensely that a scandal might be avoided.

One afternoon Mrs. Hilyer sat in her white-paneled drawing-room, surrounded by the pretty and quaint things that her taste had brought together. One rose-shaded lamp painted the room with flattering tints. The tea had just been brought up, the bits of old silver on the tray twinkled delightfully in the firelight. Clarice poured out a cupful and daintily dropped a thin slice of lemon into it. At that moment Clement Moorlake was announced.

The hand she held out to him was cold with a sudden emotion.

He had never worn more markedly his "Spanish hidalgo air;" his manner was smooth and courtly, but there was a danger signal in his eyes.

"You see, I am neighborly at last," he said, as he sat down near her.

"You have owed me a call for quite a fortnight—a first call, too, that ought to be returned within a week. Cream or lemon?"

Her hand hovering over the flower-sprinkled cups was not only cold, but unsteady.

"Milk and no sugar, thank you,"

said Moorlake. "I was sorry your call was cut so short. I wish you had stayed."

Clarice dared to look toward him, and met his eyes full. He looked like an executioner.

"Are you quite sure you mean that?" she purred; then, to hide the shaking hand, she took up a silver cigarette case and selected a cigarette. "Will you smoke?" she asked.

"I will watch you," said Moorlake.

"Do you disapprove? Do you think it a vice?" she asked, as she applied a wax match and the tobacco caught fire.

"It is at least a vice that injures only the person who indulges in it," said Moorlake.

"It spoils the curtains," said Clarice.

"They are easily purified," said he.

"Would that we might send our consciences twice a year to be cleansed in the same way," said she.

"Do *you* feel the need of that? I thought women did not require that process."

He was drinking his tea, and she was smoking. She was thoroughly at home in her management of a cigarette; she kept the end dry and didn't gasp, swallow the smoke or get it into her eyes till they blinked, as some women do. She had a knowing way of knocking off the ashes, too; she took refuge in the maneuver now, for she was not quite sure yet of her self-control.

"You see," she observed, "it takes a fortnight to have anything cleaned; one couldn't do for two weeks without a conscience!"

Clement smiled in spite of himself. She was exquisite, sitting in the pale brocade chair, in her scarlet crêpe tea gown.

"I have thought this last fortnight that yours had gone to the cleaner's—or somewhere else," he said.

"That," said she, readily, "presupposes that I had one to send. When a thing is soiled past all cleaning it goes—not to the cleaner, but to the dust-bin. But why this magisterial air, Mr. Moorlake? What have I done?"

"What *have* you done? I wish *you* would tell me that," said Moorlake. He set down his cup and gave his undivided attention to her.

"Do you know," said she, breathing more freely now that the smoke veiled her face, "I have always thought that what art gained in you was a distinct loss to the Church! With you I always feel as if all seasons of the year were Lent."

"This is not the first time you have called me a prig, Mrs. Hilyer. I dare say you are right; but a man isn't best pleased to be thought ultra-good, strange as it may appear. I think you know that."

"Then he should do something to prove the contrary. Perhaps you have."

He smiled again at her audacity, but the smile was chill; she saw war in it.

"Is it your experience of men that they are too good?" he asked.

"Oh, I have known so many! All kinds," said Clarice. "All kinds, and yet all so much alike."

"You find man a wearisome study?"

"Not when he talks in enigmas, like you—" Then, quite abruptly: "Why do you wish I'd stayed the other day?"

"Because in my studio you would have been—" He paused.

"Yes? well? would have been—?"
"Safe."

There was a slight pause.

She looked at him with expanded eyes.

"Have I been in danger, then?" she asked; adding suddenly, with a delicious smile, "Is *everyone* safe in your studio, Mr. Moorlake?"

Clement blushed crimson.

She did not wait to hear his answer.

"Where is Oliver North?" she asked, quickly, with a splendid glow of courage.

"Where you have sent him!" he retorted, sharp and short. The answer burst out independent of his volition.

"Come!" said Clarice. "Good! The buttons are off at last! Which has pricked the other deepest?"

She laughed a little and began lighting another cigarette.

"Stop smoking!" said Clement. He stood up and came nearer—stood over her, towering. "Attend to me! I want the truth."

"An old want!" she smiled; "and such a vague one! Who knows the truth?"

"You know it!" he said, in a low, tense voice. "You know what you've done to injure an innocent woman. What did you say to North?"

Her heart quivered with fright, but she sat very still. She felt amid her fear a sort of exultation in his strength and beauty while he dominated her.

"Why do you think I said anything to North?" she asked, steadily.

"I know it," he said, shortly.

"What was it?"

"I refuse to tell."

"I insist."

"I refuse."

Moorlake was terrified by the sudden fury that swept through him. He dared not remain so near her; he took a turn up and down the little room. She sank back in her chair, pallid above her scarlet draperies. Fear, pride, love, desire, all fought within her. She loved torturing him, yet her heart was torn; it was hard to deny him.

In a few moments he mastered himself and returned to her.

"I beg your pardon," he said, with deadly coldness; "I was wrong. I will go."

He turned to leave her. In one spring she flung herself against him.

"Moorlake!" she half-sobbed.

"Don't go! I'll tell you! Don't go!"

She seized his hand in both her own.

"Clement!" she cried, "don't go!"

She seemed incapable of any other words.

He looked down at her half in pity—the pity that a man feels for a woman when his passion does not answer hers—a pity on the border of contempt. But he was too kind to hurt any woman unnecessarily.

"Sit down," he said. "Compose yourself, and answer me one question. Don't speak now; take time."

In an agony of shame she hid her face in her hands. She was within a few inches of him, and she knew that the poles divided them.

He was the only man who had ever really mastered her; and she knew that for him she did not exist. In a moment he would get what he wanted and she would never see him again. She drew out the minute to its fullest extent. They had sunk to the sofa, he with unspoken scorn, as far from her as its limits allowed; she with her heart bounding, her temples beating, every feeling swallowed up in the one thought that she would lose him at the end of a minute. And the minute expired and another was born, and still she was silent, still she crouched, palpitating, with her face hidden. He was stern and pale; he would not relent. She dared not face him, for she felt, without seeing, the look in his face. The second minute slipped by, and then he spoke.

"What did you say to Oliver North?" he demanded, and his voice sounded like the trump of doom.

There was no help for it; she had to speak.

"I only told him—" she whispered.

"Yes," he said, with forced patience.

"Yes; you told him—?"

"She was there." Her voice died away.

"Is that all?" he asked, still inexorable.

"Yes, all."

"Thank you," said Moorlake. He rose to go. She stretched out one hand to him; the other still hid her face.

"Is that all you want?" she asked, in a muffled voice.

Moorlake drew a deep breath.

"All," he said. "No, one thing more. Will you promise me not to injure *her*? She is an innocent woman."

Then at last she uncovered her face, and her eyes blazed at him.

"No! no!" she said. "I won't promise! She must take her chances, like other women."

His face hardened again.

"Think," he said, "if there were anything in your life you would wish to hide!"

She looked at him defiantly.

"There is no such thing," she said.

"Of course not," he assented. "I said, 'if there were.' I appealed to your imagination—that was all."

His cold words stung like hail.

He looked full at her and added, pointedly: "There is nothing, of course—nothing."

She grew restive under his eyes and changed color.

"Why should I go out of my way," she asked, uneasily, "to shield a woman who is not even a friend of mine?"

"Only because she is a woman—a woman who never injured you, and never would wish to injure anyone. Be magnanimous, as you can afford to be."

"You think," said Clarice, with a strange smile, "that I can't afford to be anything else?"

"You can afford to be anything you choose, but I know that you will choose to be only what is kind—and generous."

She flashed out, suddenly:

"I wonder if you would protect *me* like this, if *I* were in her power."

"Undoubtedly," said Moorlake.

"Why?" she asked, and waited with a strained face for the answer. It was very simple.

"Because," he said, "you are a woman."

Her muscles relaxed and she fell back listlessly.

"What a tragedy!" she murmured, "to be a woman!"

"Only for those who will have it so," said Moorlake. "Come," he added; "I have your promise?"

She thought she saw a gleam of humanity. After a moment's hesitation she said:

"I promise—but it is for you."

"For me or for her," he answered, "it is the same thing."

"You are one?" said Clarice, with a return of the old mockery.

"One in the desire not to suffer for a sin of which we are innocent," said Clement, gravely. "Thank you," he added, presently, and without another word left the room.

XII

It is a well-known fact that a crushed and sorrowing soul takes refuge in change of scene and, what is equally trite, carries its misery with it wherever it goes.

Althea's distaste for London grew and grew to such an extent that she could remain there no longer. She was now practically dependent on the Vincents. Her long and trying interviews with Oliver's solicitor had been unproductive. The man pitied her sincerely and wished to help her; but the machinery of the law is hard to set in motion and, like the mills of the gods, grinds slow. He promised to extort money from North if he could possibly do so; he disliked his client and respected Althea, and she knew that he would do his best.

There was no news of Violet; and what that meant to the mother only mothers can know.

Althea had a few fine jewels given her by her husband during the soon-chilled warmth of the honeymoon. These Bertie sold for her, and thus her immediate necessities were supplied.

Somehow or other some hint as to the condition of her affairs had got abroad. Mrs. Mellor, the devoted and insipid bride—a bride no longer—met her in the street and passed her without recognition, while a burning blush on the lovely Christmas-supplement face told Althea that the slight was intentional. The untempted virtuous woman cut the tempted virtuous one.

Another day, when Althea was sitting in Kensington Gardens under budding elms, Mrs. Banfrey, the actor's wife, came by. Althea prepared herself for another rebuff. But with all its faults the stage is not narrow-minded. Mrs. Banfrey stopped and seized her hand.

"My dear!" she exclaimed, "where have you kept yourself? What are you afraid of? We all like you; why don't you go about any more?"

Althea colored painfully, but she held the hand with gratitude; she

was mean-spirited enough to like pity.

"No one believes it," continued Mrs. Banfrey. She sat down and patted the hand she still held. "And if anyone did," she added, "the time for high moral indignation is over. Haven't other women had disagreeable husbands?—and haven't they liked other men better? It's quite natural; anybody who says it isn't is a sneak and a story-teller. Why don't you face the world? It'll be all right when you're married."

Althea pulled back her hand quickly.

"Married?" she repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Married to Moorlake. Of course, he will marry you?"

Mrs. Banfrey looked at her over her sable collar, with a handsome face full of frank friendliness. Althea turned cold.

"I don't understand you," she said, with painful agitation. "Mr. Moorlake is nothing to me—or I to him. I don't know what you've heard, but whatever it is, it is not true."

Mrs. Banfrey looked confused.

"Now you're angry," she said. "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean any harm. Even if it *were* true, you know, I should like you just as much—and I always liked you when we used to meet at Nellie's, though I never knew you well."

"Would *you* like it," asked Althea, almost fiercely, "if people told lies against your character?"

Mrs. Banfrey reflected a moment.

"No," she admitted. "I don't suppose I should. Perhaps they do; if they don't, it's because I'm absurdly, pitifully in love with my own husband, as a hundred other women are, worse luck!"

"I have not wronged my husband in any way," Althea burst out. "It is all the other way; but there is no use in talking about him." Her mouth trembled weakly.

"You poor dear!" said the actor's wife. "How *can* anyone be a brute to you! I almost wish it were true—that that icy piece of perfection would come to life and carry you off."

Althea could not answer this preposterous remark. Presently she said: "Mrs. Mellor cut me dead day before yesterday. I think she was cruel."

Mrs. Banfrey made an inarticulate sound expressive of disdain.

"That china image! She nearly killed Geoff that night at Nellie's. It really isn't fair of the Creator to make a thing so pretty and fill it only with clockwork. Why, Mrs. North, you have more soul in your little finger than she has brains in her head! The little barber's block!"

"She is happy," said Althea. "She has a husband who loves and protects her; she has never known temptation, and she can afford to trample on an unfortunate woman who has nothing."

Mrs. Banfrey looked at her curiously.

"And it isn't true," she said; "not any of it?"

Althea faced her gravely.

"What *is* true," she said, "is that I am a deserted wife, who has lost her child, and who has no lover. That is the truth; you may tell it to everyone who wants to know."

"My poor dear!" cried Mrs. Banfrey. "I believe you, every word, and I'll stand by you through everything. And as for Mrs. Mellor, she must pay for her boxes—after this! Geoff sha'n't give her any!"

Althea hurried home and into Nellie's arms. "Take me away," she said; "I can't bear it any more."

And so, without a word to Clement, they crossed the Channel.

XIII

BRITTANY in the Spring is a very fair substitute for England. The lanes are full of immense primroses; the fruit trees are loaded with bloom, for as yet no drought has browned the grass and withered the leaves. The keen sea breeze counteracts the unsanitary condition of the towns and disinfects the atmosphere of places

where drains are a name and good water a priceless boon.

The Vincents had found an old château, standing in a great garden near a little Breton village, not many kilometers from a certain fashionable town on the coast. There was a winding path through the beech woods which led to the shores of the Rance, that wide river which is really not a river, but a huge salt arm of the sea.

The château was a large, square, white stucco building three stories high, the third story formed by the gray slate roof. It was draped thickly with wistaria, Virginia creeper and roses white and yellow, which flowered riotously even in Spring in that sheltered spot. The salon and the dining-room were paneled in white wood. There were old portraits and ancient mirrors in tarnished frames on the walls. The furniture was stately and chipped and moth-eaten. The curtains were of white muslin, so often washed that they had become what the French call too "ripe" to bear washing again. The garden was a mass of bloom. The sundial was almost covered with roses. The borders of the pond were rich in ferns, the flower beds were edged with strawberries, and the paths lined with thickets of lilac, bay and box.

The life was ideally simple. The Vincents, who never wanted company when they had each other, were perfectly happy in this solitude. Bertie had his camera, his easel, his piano, his sailboat; Nellie tended the garden and learned new dishes from the cook, who wore a wonderful thin muslin Breton cap, full of inexplicable pins and streamers; took long walks in the flowering lanes, sailed on the Rance, drove sometimes to the neighboring town, where she had friends; made lace, wrote letters—and was quite contented.

With Althea it was different. Nature alone is not enough to banish sorrow. Solitude has often a corroding effect on a character already inclined to be morbid. Althea should have had company and distraction, but she was too sensitive in her pres-

ent anomalous position to desire them. Moorlake was silent; he, too, was waiting.

One day, when Althea was sitting in the blooming garden, where the keen, almost cold air contrasted with the wealth of flowers, the postman came, as usual. She had ceased to expect news from the outside world, and when the maid handed her a letter she took it with unfeigned lack of interest. It was a document in a long, legal-looking envelope, with American stamps on it, and the postmark was Sioux Falls, Dakota. She opened the cover and read the contents. It was long before she mastered them. When the meaning penetrated at last to her tortured understanding she rose and went to Nellie. Nellie, her constant refuge, was putting fresh roses into vases in the dining-room. Bertie was sitting in the corner, cleaning his palette.

"Nellie—Bertie—" said Althea, and for a moment could say no more. Her face was dreadful—suddenly sunken as if death had touched it.

Bertie sprang up, and Nellie put her arm round her. They saw the paper in her hand, and gently drew it away.

"Look!" she said; "it is come. Look!"

Vincent examined the paper. It was a formal announcement that on a certain date Oliver North had sued for a divorce and the case had "gone by default." It had been one of those monstrous and iniquitous mockeries of law which have become customary, and which the United States Government either cannot or will not put an end to.

"What does it mean, Bertie?" asked Althea. "I don't quite understand."

Vincent's face was very stern.

"It means," said he, "that North has had his revenge. He has divorced her," he added, to his wife.

"The brute!" cried Nellie.

"And my child?" said Althea.

There was silence for a moment; no one answered.

"I'm afraid he has the child," presently said Vincent.

Again weakness overcame Althea; she sank into a chair and hid her face. Nellie felt that she could offer no comfort just then. She went on mechanically handling the roses on the table. After a few moments, during which all three were silent, Althea looked up.

"This means," said Althea, "that I am free. Disgraced—and free."

"Free, but not disgraced," said Vincent, warmly. "There is not a creature in the world who believes you guilty."

Althea smiled sadly.

"Can I keep this a secret—for a time?" she asked. "I don't want . . ."

The Vincents had enough perception to fill in the pause. They knew that she was thinking of Moorlake.

"Will it be in the papers?" Althea went on.

"In the American ones, I suppose," said Nellie; "but people in London don't see them much."

"I will go away for a little," said Althea. "I want to think," and she left the room.

Her friends heard her slowly ascending the stairs. They looked at each other.

"Will he come?" asked Nellie, and Bertram only shook his head, like one in doubt.

A week after the arrival of the letter something occurred hardly less disquieting. One afternoon, when the Vincents were sailing on the Rance, Althea was wandering aimlessly in the garden. Exquisite nature was by degrees soothing her pain. It is hard to carry a sorrow under a blue sky amid roses. For a time, while the breeze blows and the flowers bloom and the sun shines, one must relax one's hold on trouble. It was so with Althea. Something of the sweet, impersonal charm of nature stole over her; her mind was grown accustomed to care, and to-day she bore it more lightly; it began to chafe her less.

The Breton maid came out under the trees, her snowy cap shining

white under the sun rays. She held a salver, and on it was a card.

"Mrs. Moorlake."

The utter unexpectedness of the name stopped Althea's blood for an instant.

It took but a moment to cross the grass and enter the house, but that moment was fraught with a dozen sensations. She would not give herself time to hesitate and grow timid. She went straight to the salon.

Mrs. Moorlake sat very upright in an old carved chair, one hand on its arm, the other holding a parasol. She rose as Mrs. North came in. Her gown was of black silk, made in a by-gone style, but she looked like a queen—the queen of fiction, not of real life. Eyes like Clement's fixed themselves on Althea, who forced herself to meet them. She felt that they were hostile.

Neither spoke for a few moments. The strain was manifestly disagreeable.

"I have not the honor of knowing you well," said Mrs. Moorlake at last. "You may wonder at my coming. I am at Dinard for a day or two, and I heard that you were here."

Althea looked at her with fascinated attention. Even the voice was like Clement's. An agony of longing rushed over her—longing to hear *his* voice, not the counterfeit, which brought only a sense of trouble, without consolation.

"Oh, you are at Dinard?" she said, hardly knowing what she said. "A pretty place, isn't it?"

"Pretty enough, but I don't like the natives," said the old lady, drily. "My mind is too much occupied with a rather painful subject—I cannot enjoy the beauties of Brittany, or of any other place, because of this pre-occupation—"

"I am sorry," said Althea, with colorless civility. She was bracing herself for what was coming.

"I will not apologize for my visit," went on Mrs. Moorlake.

"I am sure you never apologize for anything," said Althea, and was shocked to hear the enmity expressed in her tone.

The note of war had been sounded. Mrs. Moorlake's nostrils expanded—fine, sensitive nostrils like those of her son.

"I do not apologize for what I do," she said, "because I do nothing that I think wrong."

"That is certainly the way to be happy," observed Althea. Her courage had returned.

"I have never seen you, except once in my son's studio—I will not recall that unlucky day—but I fancy that you are a woman who will listen to reason."

"I have nothing else to listen to—when you speak," said Mrs. North, politely.

The elder woman eyed her narrowly.

"The present generation is trifling and satirical. They would manufacture smart phrases at the brink of the grave. It was not so with us. We knew how to be serious. I shall not make a long story. My son knows nothing of this visit. He is at home, and he does not think that I am near you. I heard only two days ago that your husband had divorced you. You must pardon my touching on this painful subject."

"Never apologize," said Althea, "when you are doing right."

"I have been," proceeded the old lady, "obliged to know what has happened between you and my son—not much, perhaps, but *too* much, certainly, judged by the standards of virtuous women. Clement is extremely chivalrous, fantastic even, in his dealings with the other sex. He and I differ. He considers man the aggressor. I, on the contrary, believe that women are responsible to the uttermost for whatever happens to them."

"Your views are extremely interesting," said Althea, who was very pale, "but I fail to see why you made this long, dusty journey for the purpose of declaring them to a stranger." She spoke without a shadow of insolence, but her words nettled the other woman.

"Because I have more than the

declaration of my views to make. I think it highly probable that my son, with his overstrained sense of honor, may ask you to marry him. You must see that, for several reasons, this must not be."

"I should like to hear the reasons."

"You shall; that is only fair. First of all I do not recognize divorce—the Church does not, either. In any case, your divorce is one of those fraudulent ones obtainable only in America. You cannot marry again, legally—at least, not in England. Is not that reason enough?"

"If there are more reasons I should like to hear them."

The old lady looked at Althea with a certain softening of countenance. She loved courage, and admired that of her victim.

"There is nothing," she said, "so near my heart as my boy. He is all I have. He is the best man God ever made, and what he is to me I can't even try to express. He is a great sculptor; everyone recognizes that. He is on the eve of being made an R.A. If he marries a divorced woman he will be ruined."

She paused and looked anxiously for Althea's reply. Suddenly Althea broke out into a peal of laughter—laughter scarcely sane.

Mrs. Moorlake was appalled.

"You *laugh!*" she cried, disgusted.

"I *laugh!*" said Althea, wiping her eyes, and smiling like a mad woman. "Why shouldn't I? I am ruined, penniless, disgraced—without husband, child or lover—and all this might be remedied if you hadn't set your heart on your son being an R.A.! Oh, it's funny! funny!" and she laughed again, while the tears trickled over her wan face.

Mrs. Moorlake saw that she was on the verge of hysterics, and was alarmed. She produced a little flask of lavender salts and offered it to Althea.

"You have been tried too far," said Mrs. Moorlake, kindly.

"Don't mind it," said Althea, more calmly. "Everyone insults me, ex-

cept the Vincents. I am used to it, only—only— Oh, have you no sense of proportion? Is the Royal Academy heaven? I know R.A.'s who are not angels. Would you rather have your son an R.A. than an honest man?"

Mrs. Moorlake kept her temper.

"Try to be calm," she said. "Let us put the Royal Academy out of the question, put aside my natural pride in my boy, and think of the other reasons. In order to marry you Clement would be obliged to expatriate himself. You and he could not live in England."

Althea's sobs and smiles ceased. She was once more pale and composed.

"My dear lady," she said, "your reasons are good, but I have one that is better. You take it for granted that I want to marry your son. Nothing on earth would induce me to do so. Your son does not love me."

Mrs. Moorlake sank back in her chair. Surprise was pictured in her face.

"You know that?" she cried, and her black lace draperies trembled with her movement. "I never would have said it to you; I am not cruel enough."

"There was very little that you did not say," said Althea. "You need not have spared me that. I have never had the slightest wish to marry your son. I repeat, nothing on earth could persuade me to do so."

The mother drew a long sigh of relief.

"My dear Mrs. North," she said, "you make me very happy."

"Thank you," said Althea; "that is for me a great privilege."

"You feel bitter toward me, I'm afraid; but I assure you that personally I have nothing whatever against you."

"You are very kind; but while we are in the Palace of Truth let me tell you that I very much resent what you have done. The question was one that only Mr. Moorlake and I could decide. You came here without warning, with a face like a hanging judge,

to dictate to me. If I had wished to marry your son, do you think I should have hidden myself here and concealed my address?"

"Clement knows your address."

"He is as indifferent to me as—I am to him." Althea stumbled in these words. She was by nature a truth-teller. "We have been," she went on, "involved in a net of terrible circumstances. We must try to forget—to live them down—that is all."

"I am sorry for you, Mrs. North, and I respect you," said Mrs. Moorlake. She rose somewhat stiffly from her chair.

"Never apologize," said Althea, smiling.

"You turn my words against me," said the old lady. "May I ask you one favor? Do not tell Clement that you have seen me."

"I have no communication with Mr. Moorlake. I trust you not to mention my name to him."

Mrs. Moorlake extended her hand.

Althea ignored it and walked toward the door.

"You have a carriage, of course?" she asked. She touched a bell, and the Bretonne appeared.

"Good-bye," said Mrs. Moorlake. There was a red flush on her cheeks.

Althea stood on the doorstep and watched the carriage drive away.

When Bertie and Nellie returned they found her quite composed. She told Nellie of Mrs. Moorlake's visit.

"It has done me good," she said. "She made me feel raving at first, but afterward I realized . . ." Her voice died away and she looked out of the great window by which they were sitting.

"Realized what?" asked Nellie, softly.

"How impossible it all is. I think I had had a sort of unacknowledged hope, or rather wish, before. That old lady put it all so clearly to me, Nellie. I saw it all—Clement the cold, respectable candidate for the Royal Academy, and poor me, nobody in particular, weighed down by an ugly scandal, living on charity. You see

it wouldn't do—even if he loved me . . . I mean to be very different after this. I intend to be done with sighing and crying and making demands on your sympathies. I am not old and I am not wicked. My sin is that I have suffered and suffered till I couldn't bear the pain any more, and now I am punished for having been patient so long. You know, when people in the old days were crucified and took too much time dying, they had their bones broken. Well, I feel like that; all my tortures haven't killed me, but my bones are broken. Mrs. Moorlake smashed a few to-day—her son broke some before I left England. But I'm going to knit them together somehow, and stand up and face people. Oliver North is the sinner, not I. People will find that out some day."

Althea's words were feverish, but not her manner. Nellie gazed at her in surprise.

"I think," she said, with some heat, "that that old woman deserves to be shut up. It was intolerable of her to come."

"She came because she loved Clement; and I resented it because I loved Clement. That fact can't be mended. I must face it." She was silent for a few moments, staring out into the dusky garden. Then she went on: "Nellie, do you believe in God?"

"Of course," said Mrs. Vincent, startled. "Don't you?"

"Yes, I do; but I can't understand anything. I have prayed and prayed and prayed, asking to be set free."

"And you have been."

"Yes, but in what a way! I can't help thinking all the time that there must be one man on earth who would have loved me. He might be poor, and not handsome; but if he had only just loved me . . . It is awful to have all that taken out of one's life so young! For I am young for my age—like a child who feels that she has a right to be happy, and yet can't be. I have tried so hard to find out why Oliver was so cruel and so indifferent, why he always left me, why he seemed to feel no responsibility

toward me; and I don't know why. It's all a puzzle."

After a pause Nellie said: "There is one thing for which I think you should be prepared. I believe that Clement is coming here."

Althea turned a shade paler in the dusk. "Why? Why do you say that?"

"I don't know, but I feel sure of it. Bertie thinks so, too."

"Don't let him come! Oh, don't let him!"

"Suppose he were to ask you to marry him—to insist on it?"

"I should refuse."

"It is easy to say so now—here; but suppose he were in this room, beside you—near, near—with his hand in yours. Could you refuse?"

Althea sprang up with a little cry.

"You are cruel!" she exclaimed. "I will not see him."

She walked restlessly to the other window. The maid came in with the lamps, and the mellow glow showed Althea with white face and wide, scared eyes. When they were alone again she came to Nellie.

"If you let him come I'll never forgive you!" she said. "It would be too degrading! He will ask me from a sense of honor to marry him—and I shall refuse. And he will go away again, and everything will be worse than ever. Don't let him come!"

Nellie sighed.

"I know I'm killing you," continued Althea, "but there will be a change. I *will* be different, I swear it. I shall begin to-morrow."

Bertie came in, dressed for dinner. Althea went up to him and laid her hand on his arm.

"I'm going to stop teasing you, Bertie," she said. "I'm going to be a nursery governess or something. I want you to tell me how to begin. I want to earn my living."

"All right," said Vincent, with his usual careless, pleasant manner. "Begin by governessing me. There are lots of things I need done for me. Nellie neglects me shamefully." The look he cast on his wife made Althea's eyes fill.

"I'll do anything you like—and I want to go sailing and I want to see Dinard. I've been getting into bad ways lately—I'm lazy and out of sorts, but I mean now to be energetic."

"Quite right," said Bertie. "Come along and energetically eat. '*Madame est servie*,' and I saw a thundering big lobster in the *garde-manger* this afternoon."

He held out his arm to Althea and took her in to dinner. She was gay and talkative, as they had not seen her for a year; but Bertie noticed, the observation of the artist quickened by affection, how fragile and pinched her face looked above the soft lace of her tea gown.

As they rose from the table the postman arrived and the letters were brought in. There was one for Althea.

It contained merely these words:

The day after you receive this I shall be with you. I do not ask permission for fear you may withhold it; but you must be kind and let me see you.

CLEMENT MOORLAKE.

XIV

WHAT Althea most craved and most dreaded had come to pass. She finished the evening creditably, having betrayed nothing. Bertie also had received a letter from Moorlake by the same post, and was concealing the fact from Althea. He felt nervous and uncomfortable, finding himself in the midst of an affair that promised to be eminently unsatisfactory to everyone concerned in it.

Althea thought that Nellie kissed her that night with a deeper, more yearning tenderness than usual—happy Nellie, whose marriage was one of the few perfect ones. Each knew the thoughts of the other, but had learned during the past months to economize their emotions and save themselves as much nervous wear and tear as possible.

When Althea was alone she gave herself no time for thought. Every

time that she began thinking of Moorlake she instantly thought of something else; the more trivial the subject the better it answered the purpose. As she lay in the old paneled room, in the dark, she tried to summon up landscapes she had seen, tunes she had heard; she even recited poems in her mind. There was one stanza of "Come into the garden, Maud," which she could never get right the first time, and by constant mental repetition she managed not to hear—or to pretend not to hear—the voice of her subjective mind, which constantly whispered: "Clement is coming to-morrow—what will you say to Clement?" Hers was a brain that worked very much like a squirrel in a cage—or rather the brain was the cage and the squirrel was the dominating idea that never was still. It toiled with agonizing effort round and round, round and round, and never got any further. To lie in the dark all alone with that in one's head is worse than a nightmare; the process is practically endless, and has nothing of the sharp crisis of a bad dream, from which one must wake.

Althea clutched her pillow and strained every fibre in her quest of diversion. Scene after scene rose before her mind with the distinctness given by overwrought nerves. Often the face of Violet came, and it was so terrible to her that she hastened to think of something—anything—else. She found herself trying to count her clothes and calculate what a Summer wardrobe would cost; then suddenly she would repeat the names of the Cæsars, making a mistake and going back to rectify it. The strain was growing intolerable, when mercifully the tired mind gave way and she fell asleep.

The first hint of morning roused her. She came to herself in a moment with the curious instantaneous impression that there was someone in the room. But it was empty of all bodily presence but hers. She rose in the nipping chill of the early morning, threw open the blinds and looked out. It was the solemn, the terrible

hour of dawn—dawn, when sins and sorrows loom large and near, and heaven and hope seem very far away. The garden was dim and chaotic, with clumps of deeper darkness blotting a sombre background. The trees were still and terrible, just discernible against a sky only less black than they.

Who that is without God and hope can bear to watch the dawn? It is the hour when the heart cries out, shuddering for some voice, some promise, to tell us that life with its struggles is not all in vain.

The neutral tints became pale, the sky cleared and trembled with a faint luminousness, the shrubs and bushes turned green. Presently the garden gave a hint of color, of heaps of pink and red and yellow roses, of masses of young lilac and golden laburnum. The birds twittered and chirped and whistled; the air was resonant with melodic flutings. The sky grew blue, the sunbeams shot up, and the flowers were no longer delicate-hued ghosts; the world was a mass of color, a riot of music, and day had come.

The silent watcher crept back to her pillow, and this time to unbroken sleep.

The inhabitants of the château drank their morning coffee in retirement, a breakfast table being a thing abhorrent to all three. Althea slipped out of the house unobserved and spent the morning in the beech woods on the edge of the Rance. She began to understand the feelings of a man condemned to be executed; every moment of delay must, she thought, make death seem harder. A few minutes before midday she strolled back to the house.

Standing by the rose-embraced sundial were the Vincents and Clement Moorlake. Much to her own surprise, Althea felt no immediate sensation at sight of him. They shook hands very quietly, she without looking at him. The human heart can hold only a certain amount of joy or suffering in the twenty-four hours, and Althea's power of feeling was, for the time being, exhausted.

"This is an unceremonious hour for calling," said Moorlake, "but I was impatient to see you all."

"Clement came *via* Paris," explained Nellie, who looked far more unhappy than Althea. "The train arrives very early, you know."

"This is a difficult place to get to," said Clement. "All roads are equally disagreeable."

He was looking at Althea; she felt the glance, though she was trying to pretend, like a child, that he was somebody else. She dared not let the full sense of his presence sink into her consciousness. Yet she seemed to know without seeing that he was worn and tired, that there was an accentuation of that aspect of delicacy which accorded so ill with his great muscular strength.

Nellie noticed how colorless his clear, fine skin had grown and how much grayer was his hair at the temples. He, too, she thought, had no doubt had his battles to fight!

"My mother is at Dinard," said Moorlake. "I saw her a few minutes this morning—met her accidentally, in fact. I did not know she was there; I thought she was at Dinan."

"They are very close together, you know," said Althea. She forced her eyes to meet Clement's, and saw a question in them. He was mentally asking, "Have you seen her?"

"Come to breakfast," said Bertie, who had been loitering about examining the roses. "Looks like June, doesn't it?" he added, turning to Clement.

"A lovely climate, apparently," said Moorlake. "I always wonder when I am on the Continent why we live in England."

"And I," said Nellie, as she led the way to the breakfast-room, "always wonder why we ever leave it. Even the costermongers seem nice to me after the Latin races."

"Don't be rude, Nellie," said Moorlake. "Remember that my grandmamma was an Italian."

"That's the only thing about you that's not nice; it suggests stilettos and vendettas."

"To an American it suggests peanuts and cheap ice cream, grind-organs and monkeys," said Althea, and she went on in this vein as if she were entertaining a man she had never met before.

Clement, after his racking night in the train, was downright hungry, and unaffectedly enjoyed his breakfast, eaten from Quimper plates with big fleurs-de-lis on them in two shades of blue. Althea thought bitterly how strange it was that men could nearly always eat. She herself pretended, and talked fast enough to cover the pretense.

It had been part of her plan of self-immolation to take no extraordinary trouble in dressing herself that day. She had on a well-worn dark blue coat and skirt and a simple mauve silk blouse. Air and excitement had given her a color of unusual brilliancy; sorrow had a little sharpened features already delicate; nothing could spoil the lovely mass of warm-tinted hair that owed all its beauty to nature. Bertie and Nellie looked at her anxiously, and thought she had never appeared more charming. To them she was lovely and lovable; why could not their friend see her with their eyes? After breakfast they all sat in the garden, with their coffee and cigarettes, in a spot made genially warm by the sunshine.

First Bertie made some flimsy excuse and drifted away; Nellie talked on bravely, but in a few minutes Bertie called to her, "Come, look at this rosebush! It's really extraordinary," and she followed him.

Clement smiled; even at that moment, which he felt to be one of the most important in his existence, the transparent pretext amused him. Althea did not look at him. She was wrapping about her more closely a light scarf she wore as protection against the Spring wind. There was only a minute of silence. Then Moorlake said, bluntly:

"Have you seen my mother?"

The suddenness of the question startled Althea; and he saw that she was embarrassed.

"Are you under oath not to divulge her visit?" asked Clement, "for I feel sure that she has been here."

"I have taken no oaths," said Althea. "I never will. I think they are unwise and dangerous."

"No vows, either?" he asked, with a curious light in his eyes which she had never seen there, which made her realize that Moorlake, without his rigid sense of duty, might be a very dangerous man who would enjoy being dangerous.

"Nor vows, either," she said, firmly.

"Perhaps I shall induce you to break your vow not to make vows," he said, with a deep, liquid note in his usually cold voice.

At that moment he felt very human; the past seemed less alive than usual, and the future more vaguely desirable.

Althea felt the change in his mood, and steeled herself against it.

"I don't think your mother made me promise anything," she said.

"Then she was here?"

"Yes; since I am truthful, I must say she was."

"With what object?"

Clement had thrown away his cigarette and was bending toward her. Intense interest shone in his eyes.

Althea hesitated a moment, then said, bravely:

"In the interests of her son."

"In what her son would call his interests?"

"I think so—in the long run."

"But not just now?"

"Yes, perhaps just now, too."

"I don't believe it," said Clement, decidedly. "But why must we talk in enigmas? Are we strangers?"

"Yes," said Althea. "I think we are." Then, after a perceptible pause, "I think we always shall be."

"Why don't you trust me?" he asked, impetuously. "Why won't you help me? You know why I have come."

"You came to see us—the Vincents and me—because you needed a change. Let it rest there."

He looked at her with astonishment.

"Do you think that I came all this distance to hear you give such an order as that?—or to obey it?"

Althea shivered a little.

"It is too cold here. Shall we go into the house?" she asked, rising.

"Certainly," he said, also rising, "if we can be alone."

They walked toward the château in silence. He felt curiously piqued and eager for one intimate word or look. It seemed as if their positions had suddenly been reversed. He knew Althea so little that he believed for a moment her manner of dealing with him was dictated by coquetry; but one look at her pale face and compressed mouth undeceived him.

They reached the salon unremarked. Moorlake shut the door and stood waiting for her to sit down. When both were seated, he said: "It is not kind of you to keep me at arm's length."

To this she had nothing to answer.

"Surely," he said, "we have much to say to each other. You may feel a natural resentment because I have involved you in so much unhappiness, but in spite of that you must know that I am your best friend—that at least I want to be—"

"Please," she interrupted, "don't speak of the past! It is more than I can bear."

"Then let me speak of the future—that in which I beg to have a share. Tell me what my mother said to you. She has somehow turned you against me."

"Your mother loves you more than anyone does—at least in a more unselfish way—" she hesitated and colored, then went on: "You know what you are to her, how she builds on your future—your career. You still have a long life before you—"

"I am forty years old," said Clement. "If I have done nothing so far, I shall never do or be anything."

"But you have done something. You are a great sculptor; everyone says so."

"You mean my mother says so." He made the amendment smiling.

"You are going to be an R. A.," she said, also smiling, but with some bitterness. "If you do nothing wrong or bohemian or uncanonical you are going to be one of the Forty."

A sudden illumination came into his face.

"That is what my mother said to you!" he exclaimed. "I understand." He looked both amused and vexed. Loyalty and annoyance struggled within him.

"You must forgive her, Althea." She winced at the sweetness of hearing him pronounce her name. "Remember that she is the one person to whom I am a heaven-born genius. She has lived only for me all these years, while I have been making statues until I've almost become a statue myself. A hard medium of expression—and you hate sculpture; you told me so when we first met."

Althea breathed freely. He was unbending, he was becoming a human being with whom she might talk humanly, who could in time, perhaps, open his soul to her—that part of it at least which did not contain the mysterious Other Woman.

"Do you know," she said, impulsively, leaning forward, "now, for the first time in ever so long, I feel that we are friends! I am so glad, because I had come to feel a sort of terror of you, as of something strange and unreal and icy! The thought of you was dreadful to me."

"My poor child!" he said. "I have been but a bad friend to you. But I will atone—if you will let me."

They were not far apart. He stretched out his hand—warm, appealing, consolatory—and gently took her cold one.

She made a quick movement.

"Oh, please don't touch me!" she cried, with a sharp accent of pain.

In a moment he understood her—how she was bracing herself to withstand him, steeling her heart against him, fighting down her love for him, smothering and crushing the passionate craving for his affection which

had well-nigh killed her during all the time of her great trouble. And once again, as so often before, he longed to give her his whole heart and life and soul without reservation.

"Have I been presumptuous?" he said, softly, still lightly holding her hand. "Won't you give me the right to care for you? You are free now, Althea."

"No, Clement, I shall never be free," she said, with passionate sadness. "I am a dishonored woman; all the venal laws in America cannot make me free. Nothing can right me now—not even if there were a man who loved me."

"'If,' Althea? There is no 'if.' There is a man who loves you, who will try to make up to you for what you have lost."

"Ah, Clement, don't tempt me! A woman who loves as I do is easily tempted! But she is not easily satisfied. Even if I were really free, I would never, never—" She paused in distress before the word.

"Never marry me, Althea? why?" he asked.

"There are so many good reasons—so many, and you know them all," she said.

"You are thinking about the legality of it, aren't you? We could go away—we need not live in England, where people are old-fashioned and narrow-minded. Is a woman, an innocent, unhappy woman, to go solitary all her days because a brute has deserted her? That reason is soon disposed of."

"There is another reason, Clement," she said, in a low tone. "I need not remind you of it."

He stiffened suddenly. "You mean," he said, "the other—because—"

"Because you do not love me."

She spoke very firmly and with immeasurable sadness.

He paused and looked at her squarely. "Althea, it is five years since I saw the person of whom you are thinking. She has been married for some time."

"But you love her, Clement, and only her. You have never deceived me. How could I care for you as I do if you had? You would not be the man I love if you could lie to me."

He was confounded and knew not what to answer.

"Do you think," she said, with suppressed passion, "that I could be your wife and know that your heart and soul belong to that other woman? Could I take your kind pity for me—your liking, even your affection—when what you and I know to be *love* is wanting? I *could* not share you with another woman, Clement! Better that you should be as unattainable as the stars! I could still think of you—still love you as the worthiest man I have ever known—but marry you, no! Ah, no, it would be terrible! I believe you know—I know now—that there is no middle course, no happiness in being second best."

Clement was still silent. This last revelation of Althea's character showed him what she was—what sort of woman he might have loved if the phantom of the past had not been between them.

"This must be the end—really the end," she went on. "We must not meet any more. I do not say that I shall try to forget you, for the memory of you will be my dearest possession; but I shall try to avoid ever seeing you again. I don't think I even want your picture—I could not bear it. I have hurt you, troubled you dreadfully in dragging you into my pitiful life, where you should never have come; but you forgive me—I know you do."

Her wide, pleading eyes gazed straight into his. He sat in a tense, strained attitude, with the look she had learned to know so well—his brows bent, his dark eyes—like those of no other man—shining with strange lights.

"Never speak of forgiveness, Althea," he said. "My one wish is to atone—to make reparation—to bring you some happiness, if you will only let me. Althea, I swear that I love you! You are the only woman I

would marry. Will you not risk it? Who could help loving you? I never knew you till to-day, and I know that no man could be indifferent to you."

A sudden wave of hope passed over her; her body tingled with the glow of leaping blood.

"Clement!" she said, "if you can tell me on your honor that I am dearer to you than the other woman . . ."

His face changed. He stood up and walked to the window. She sat with her hands clenched, waiting. The birds sang in the garden. All life—its pain, its joy, its hope, its disappointment—was in that minute while the birds sang. To the man at the window death would have been less bitter. When he turned Althea knew that the hope and the joy were over, that only the pain and the disappointment were left.

"I know the answer," she said, very gently. "Don't grieve over it, Clement; it is better so."

Moorlake was a strong man; he had never cried in his life, but his heart wept then.

XV

MOORLAKE returned to London, but one sunny morning in early August found him on the beach at Dinard. He could hardly have explained why he was there. He was subject once in every few years to fits of atrophied will—periods of involition during which half of his nature hurried him into actions deeply condemned by the other half. And at one of these times he came to Dinard.

He had heard nothing from the Vincents or from Althea. Life seemed perfectly tasteless and uninteresting. He felt the lassitude left by a long, hot London season, in which his part had been played even more perfunctorily than usual. But much of his sadness, which was chronic and constitutional, was temporarily banished by the scene about him.

It was the hour when the smart world of Dinard is wont to plunge into the gentle waves and wash away

some of the weariness caused by all-night baccarat, prefaced by dancing. Many bathed, but more looked on. The sands, clean and glittering, were covered with chairs, the chairs with lovely ladies, and the lovely ladies with fresh, light gowns. There were very few painted faces and dyed heads; even the most charming had that seal of respectability which in the eyes of the well-conducted adds a charm to beauty. There was the usual sprinkling of racketty August visitors who change Dinard from a staid residential town, conquered by Anglo-Saxons, into a vortex of baccarat, cocktails, flirtations, picnics and balls. Then it is that men have been known to drink yellow chartreuse out of wine glasses at the club in the morning, and mothers of families sit with greedy eyes fixed on the "little horses" as they run along, winning—for the bank. Then it is that there is time for nothing but enjoyment—when one sits of an afternoon opposite the Casino, at the pastry cook's—where the cakes are guaranteed to add a stone to one's weight in six weeks—when one curses, if one is an Anglo-Saxon, between sips of Ceylon tea, the truly Gallic cruelty of the stupid Breton *cochers* who congregate in that quarter—a vile blot on the loveliness of the place.

There is an amusement for every hour and for every minute a fresh subject of gossip—dear, delightful, diverting gossip—which leaves "not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean."

Moorlake's sober face was out of place on the *plage*, and many a woman thought how pleasant it would be to call a smile to it. The morning was made for happiness; it was neither cold nor hot; the air was light and exhilarating, with a tang of salt in its softness.

Clement saw a chair standing somewhat apart from the others, and appropriated it. There were a good many people in the water, but none wore the extraordinary costumes in vogue at other French watering places. Few dresses were coquettish, or even

becoming. Presently a tall figure waded ashore. It was a woman who had been swimming. She was dressed in pale blue, and her head was covered by a blue silk handkerchief with great ends standing up on top. She was accompanied by several men, and passed quite close to Moorlake on the way to her cabin. For an instant he saw her in profile, and was conscious of a sudden shock. He turned and watched her retreating figure—a very good one, even in its undisguised state. He saw her enter the cabin, after a few chaffing words with her escort at the door; noted the number, and sat for three-quarters of an hour facing it, waiting for her to come out.

At last, after several excursions of her maid, fetching and carrying between the cabin and some unknown point, the lady opened the door, put out a well-shod foot, and stepped forth on the beach. No wonder it had taken forty-five minutes to make her what she was. She was dressed in the fashion of the day-after-to-morrow—for which she did not mean to pay till the day after that. To look at her was to realize the actual existence of all those mysterious French words found even in the least French of fashion papers—*tabliers, applique, revers*—to say nothing of incrustations, pipings, accordéon pleatings and other things to be found in England. The gown was a marvelous collection of materials, so cunningly constructed that a man who was not in the business would have called it "simple," thus proving himself the same. The figure inside the gown was all that comparative youth, conscientious exercise and four-guinea stays could make it. The lady's hat was a wide-brimmed "confection" of big pink roses, with yards of tulle that did wonderful things all round them, and finally wound itself about the wearer's throat. The face under the hat was charmingly tinted—by what did not yet appear—and had straight features and hard blue eyes. The hair was the color of gilt, with even waves that looked as if they were cut out of brass, from the nape of the

long neck to the place where they met the back of the hat.

Moorlake sat on his chair and looked at the lady. He could not have catalogued her like the cold narrator. He only knew that she was the woman he had loved for fifteen years.

She came over the sands directly toward him. He rose.

"I can't be mistaken," she began, in a hard, clear voice; "you are surely Clement Moorlake?"

"Yes," he admitted, "I am."

"You don't know me? It is so long since we met. To think of your being here! It's delightful. Do you know me?"

She smiled as she asked the question.

Moorlake paused before answering. He was visibly disturbed.

"You must be—I am sure you are—Lady Bembridge."

"I am Hyacinth to you, Clement, or 'Cinth,' it used to be, didn't it?"

She laughed lightly.

Moorlake winced. "That was a long time ago," he said, stiffly.

"But how well you wear! No dye, no make-up! That gray above the temples is the finishing touch to your fascination. Don't you remember, I always told you that you would grow handsomer with age? I was a true prophet."

Lady Bembridge regarded him with undisguised interest. Clement looked squarely into her hard eyes.

"Is Lord Bembridge here?" he asked.

"Oh, how like you!" cried Hyacinth. "First of all the proprieties! You have changed as little as your face. No, Bembridge is not here. We are like the little couple who foretell the weather—never seen together," and she laughed again. "We do not pose any more. Now ask me if I have any children."

"Have you?" and Clement managed to smile a little.

"None; it's a disappointment to my husband, as he hates the next heir, but I don't approve of them. Children spoil a woman's career."

"That depends on what sort of career it is."

"Mine is a sort of 'Rake's Progress.' Don't look shocked—only ugly men should ever look shocked, for then nobody would mind them. It's quite true, Clement. I have every vice except stinginess. How are you getting on? Still doing those great, lumpy statues? Have you made a fortune? If you have you must lend me something, for I ruined myself last night at the Casino."

"My letter of credit is at your disposal," said Moorlake, gravely.

"How solemn you are! It is really too nice to see you again! Where are you stopping?"

Moorlake named his hotel.

"I am breakfasting at the Terrasses, and doing things all day; but you must come to the Casino to-night, won't you?"

"I neither dance nor gamble."

"No, but you can talk—and listen. Do come! I want to see you so much!"

"Is it really *pleasant* to you to see me?"

"Of course! Why not? One outlives everything—except one's appetite. I *am* so hungry! Oh, there's Dolkovski at last. You're late, Prince. The Marchants eat at half-past twelve."

One of the escort had approached, a big Russian with a Romanoff look about him.

"They will not eat at that time to-day," he observed, with a heavy smile.

Then he looked at Clement disapprovingly.

"This is an old friend, Mr. Moorlake. But he doesn't like Russian princes. He reads Ouida, and knows they are all desperate characters. Come along, Dolly. To-night, Clement, about nine-thirty," and she walked away with her prince.

The day passed to Moorlake like a confused dream. He tried to join the new revelation to the old conception. A disease of fifteen years' standing is not to be cured by one dose of medicine, no matter how strong the drug

may be. He shrank from a repetition of the dose, but he knew that he must swallow it. And so, after hours of walking, with unseeing eyes fixed on the fine landscape, he returned to dress, dine and meet Hyacinth Bembridge at the Casino.

It was easy to distinguish her among the other women; her superior stature and the pronounced style of her gown attracted everyone's attention. She glittered from throat to feet with steel sequins, and round her neck, looped up to her breast with diamonds and falling loose again, was a rope of great pearls. There was a group of men about her, but no women. One man was a French count—the sort of thing France makes badly since the Republic—a weak, stooping, livid young creature with a preposterous nose, no chin to speak of, and a red orchid in his coat. Another was a clean-limbed, well-washed Englishman, who could not go back to England owing to pecuniary misunderstandings. A third was an elderly man with a magenta face and a bottle-nose—one of the props of the chartreuse industry—and the fourth was the Russian prince.

Moorlake hesitated a moment, then walked up to the group and bowed to Lady Bembridge.

"Oh, you did come! So glad. Come outside; it's stuffy here. Go and dance, Dolly! Madame de Ternon is looking for you."

The Russian glowered, and the little Count sighed as he surveyed Moorlake's inches.

"*Ces anglais, ces anglais!*" he murmured.

"You should make them get out," said Dolkovski, sulkily. "They think they own the place."

"*Mon cher, I am English!*" observed the magenta man, reprovingly.

"*Pardon!* I forgot. You don't look it," retorted the Prince, with double spite.

"And I," said the other Englishman.

"Ah, but one doesn't think of you as an Englishman; you can't stand the climate!"

Hyacinth drew Moorlake toward the unlighted end of the veranda. The moon was full and the tide so high that a short time before it had dashed against the stones at the base of the Casino.

"This is the flirtation corner," said Hyacinth, "but as you don't know how to flirt, it's wasted on you. I'm glad there's a moon, for people will see you, and I shall like them to. I'm awfully tired of the men, particularly Dolkovski. He's not amusing."

She leaned back in her chair, glittering like a moonbeam, fingering her pearls.

"Aren't these nice!" she went on. "I have wanted them for years. One would do anything for a rope of pearls! Solomon, who knew so much, said that the price of a virtuous woman was *above* rubies; you see, he meant pearls!"

"A new interpretation of Scripture," said Moorlake, drily. He was mentally trying to peel away this present picture of her, as one might scrape a palimpsest to get a glimpse at the old meaning beneath the accretions of time.

"How do you like Dinard?" Hyacinth rattled on. "They say Zola is coming to write up the smells. I felt inspired to-night as I came along the street to make a poem called 'Moonlight on the Drain.' Wouldn't it be a choice subject? You see the French hate us, and try to kill us with drains—or want of them. But we come, all the same, and bring Condy's Fluid. Isn't it pretty here?"

Clement thought her ill at ease, in spite of her hard eyes.

"Which question must I answer first?"

"Don't be so serious. Tell me about yourself."

"I am more serious than ever when I talk about myself, and I dislike doing it."

"How little changed you are!"

For the first time her voice was free from mockery, and she sighed.

"I am more changed than I thought or knew," he said.

"How solemn your eyes are,

Clement! I believe it was those eyes that frightened me away. . . . Sometimes I think I should like to pretend that we are young again, and that we love each other."

"That I love you," he corrected.
"You never cared for me."

"Yes, I did—in a way. I loved your beauty and your strength. Do you remember when you stopped my horse that was running away, and saved my life—for this?"

She shivered a little and drew her violet chiffon wrap about her. The gesture recalled that of Althea months before in the garden, and the thought of Althea struck warm on his heart.

"Why did you promise to marry me, Hyacinth, and then try to break my heart?" he asked.

"Why? Who knows? Why do I do anything? My life is a series of question marks, and I haven't been able to find the answers. But I think you were too good—not only better than I deserved, but too good to please me long."

"The old story—I was a prig! I suppose men all the world over who try to behave like gentlemen are called prigs."

"There are so few, Clement! Since I broke with you I have hardly known a man whom you would call a gentleman."

"Not one in fifteen years? Poor thing!"

"What is your definition of a gentleman, Clement? Opinions vary so."

Moorlake was silent for a moment.

"A man," he said, presently, "who tells the truth and never takes advantage of a woman."

"And yet, Clement, do you remember our one meeting in fifteen years—in Rome? You tried to make love to me then." She leaned forward, with the broad moonlight softening her eyes.

Moorlake flushed deeply.

"Hyacinth," he said, "I've been five years doing penance. I swore then that there should be no women in my life."

"And you have kept your vow?"

He was silent.

"You are sure you've made no one unhappy? . . . No answer? Never mind; don't tell me. You aim too high. You see, I am contented with very small triumphs in the realm of aspiration."

"Don't be so bitter about yourself," he said. "It hurts me to hear it. Why do you lead this life of which you complain?"

"Because I love excitement, because I must have money."

He glanced instinctively at the pearls she was fingering.

"Ah, those," she said, "were a present. I have nothing to live for except amusement, and I don't believe in a future life—so why pretend? I am hopelessly estranged from Bembridge. We seldom meet. Life without movement, amusement, pretty gowns and pleasant places and nice things to eat would be worse than death to me."

"And the other things for which women care—honest love, a good name, respect and consideration in society?"

"Are deadly dull and awfully overrated. I am going away from this place. There are lots of the virtuous, hardworking, painstaking matrons whom you admire, here, and they look askance at me. Not all, for I'm still a countess! but there are enough shocked faces to annoy me. I shall go to some place where the people are all French. After all, they are the only ones who can cook and who know how to wear their clothes, and I shall be happy."

Moorlake was pale with disgust.

"Happy?" he repeated.

"Well, gay! That's the nearest approach to happiness."

There was a long silence. The sound of the waltz drifted out, and stray couples came up to the corner, then, seeing Hyacinth and Moorlake, moved away.

"What are you thinking, Clement?" she asked at last.

"I am thinking that I am glad I did not kill myself fifteen years ago," he said, quietly.

"Take me back, please; I want to dance," she said, rising.

Once in the room she turned a hard face to him.

"Are you going?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. "Good-night—and good-bye."

He was glad to be alone. Fifteen years had been suddenly sponged off the slate of life. He was free—free to love the woman who loved him—free to tell her so.

Early morning found him at the château:

Before Nellie Vincent had fairly entered the room where he waited he said:

"Althea! where is she?"

"Clement, you have come too late," she replied.

"Too late! What do you mean? She's not dead?"

"Not dead; but yesterday she left us, and we don't know where she has gone."

XVI

It had not been easy for Althea to leave Dinard without the knowledge of the Vincents.

For weeks her longing to go had been growing. Her position began to appear intolerable; with the undue sensibility of overstrained nerves, she felt that she was becoming a burden to Bertie and Nellie, and she determined to be so no longer. She was possessed, moreover, by the haunting fear that Clement would not accept her refusal as final, and the thought of having to undergo a second ordeal spurred on her resolution to disappear.

One day, when the Vincents had gone to Dinan, she induced the gardener at the château to harness a cart and drive her and her boxes over to Dinard. The boat, which left at dusk, was not crowded, and she easily secured a berth.

When Nellie returned she found only these few lines awaiting her:

Forgive me, dear—both of you—my kind, good friends. I am going away for

a time. Do not try to find me. Some day I will write to you, or come. I have worn out your patience, and you must have rest. How I thank you I need not say.

ALTHEA.

Nellie's grief and alarm were little short of frantic; and meanwhile Althea lay in the cabin of the little steamer, on the way to England.

It was a long night; she was stark awake—her eyes would not stay shut. Her mind was almost a blank. She had come to that stage where there seems neither hope nor fear; where thought and reasoning faculty are alike overpowered by a curious lethargy. Without such seasons of mental supineness the nervous and overstrained must perforce become the insane.

In the early part of the night, before the few passengers settled down to rest, two ladies near Althea were talking in low tones. Althea listened mechanically.

"It is a very pretty place," said one, "and quite cheap; four miles from Arundel—a jolly old farmhouse with a thatched roof and ivy; quite a place to lose one's self in."

The last phrase interested Althea acutely.

"I often think," said the other woman, "how easy it would be to hide in such a place. That part of the world is very primitive, though it's only about two hours from town."

Althea listened still more intently.

"What's the address? I might take the children there for Easter."

"Kennerton Farm, Bury, Sussex. You go from Victoria."

Then the conversation languished, and the ladies slept.

To Althea what she had heard seemed providential—if anything could seem providential ever again. It was the voice of fate, perhaps, at last giving her a hint as to what she should do—not leaving her to flounder helplessly in the bog of circumstance. So at least she chose to consider it.

Morning found her in England—dear England, where one wanted to shake hands with the very dockmen

and policemen after a sojourn in France. Even the Hampshire accent of the Southampton natives was not unpleasing after broad, boorish Breton.

At Waterloo Althea breakfasted on the hay tea and sawdust bread made exclusively for the railway station "refreshment" contractors. Then she went to Victoria and took a ticket for Bury—or rather for the nearest town, for she found on inquiry that the railway did not touch Bury itself.

August shed its golden glory over the land. The fields basked in sunlight; the trees had lost their freshness and showed yellow in places. Here and there were cottages covered with deep purple clematis and late Gloire de Dijon roses. Althea dozed uneasily in her third-class carriage and heeded the landscape not at all.

August is the month when, if a man have a spot of earth with a wall around it, he does well to enter in and lock the gate; a month when everyone who is anywhere pants to be somewhere else. Sussex appeared to be full of people engaged in this puss-in-the-corner game. The whole population of England was changing; only, as everyone left his home and went to that of someone else, exchange was no robbery, and each place remained full.

The premier Duke of England, who owns most of the land and houses in and about Arundel, does not encourage newcomers; hence the region thereabouts is not too thickly populated to be charming. It is a noble country of great, rolling downs spattered with beech woods. In the Spring one may walk miles there and never be out of earshot of the skylarks. The blue air is drenched with their melody, and the plaintive cry of newborn lambs—that most pathetic of all sounds—ascends ceaselessly from the sheepfolds.

Bury is a hamlet whose beauty has no jarring note, except the one shop where most of the necessities of life, and a few of its superfluities, are to be bought. The natives have not yet quite discarded the smock frock; there

are farmers who are proud of being farmers, and one or two are lucky enough to have daughters who don't play the piano.

The farmer at Kennerton was one of these happy ones. Althea reached his door on foot, as she could find no trap at the station. She had flagged miserably on the way and looked plaintively at the cyclists who spun past her in the dust, bowed over their wheels as if bent on developing a curvature as soon as possible.

The old house showed a cool, northern face to the road. There, to be sure, were the thatch and the ivy of which the lady on the boat had spoken. The quiet beauty and look of home which it wore brought a gush of tears to the homeless one's eyes. By the time the farmer's daughter came to the door Althea was half-swooning with fatigue and emotion.

Miss Burt gave her one look, and liked her.

"Come in, ma'am, and rest. You had to walk, and in this heat! What a shame! Give me your bag," and she opened the door hospitably wide.

"I am very tired," said Althea, keeping back the tears.

"Hungry, too, no doubt," said Miss Burt. "Perhaps you'd like something to eat before you try to talk. This room is empty. Sit down."

They were in a low-ceiled room with a great whitewashed oak beam across it. The window was long and low, and lattice-paned. On the deep sill were jars of red roses.

"I've come from France—last night. I am very tired, and hungry, too, I think. I want to take rooms here if you have any vacant," Althea explained.

"We've just lost a lodger this morning. But I'll speak to mother, and meanwhile I'll bring you something. Perhaps you'd like to wash, ma'am?"

After ablutions in a quaint, uneven-floored room up stairs, hung with pure white dimity, Althea descended to find cold beef, salad, a fruit tart and a jug of cream set out on the table in the sitting-room.

While she ate, the kind young woman talked things over with her mother, and the bargain was soon made.

Althea became a lodger at Kenner-ton Farm.

XVII

BENEATH the shelter of the old box trees, with the humming of the bees about her and the scents and sounds of late Summer stealing in on her senses, Althea sat for many mornings. Her life passed before her like a dream—as, at the last, it will do for all of us, we may be sure—"a tale that is told." The vision brought a sense of finality to her. How easy, leaning back in her low, lounging chair, her head softly pillowed, her tired eyes closed, to slip out of life; to give up forever the ferment, the striving, the bitterness—"the fever called living!"

Owing to her defective early training she had never had a grip on life in its broadest sense—the life of strenuous endeavor, of altruistic impulse that prompts unselfish deeds. She had grown one-sided—running to emotion and not to action. Such a woman is born to suffer. Life is not loving and dreaming.

The light of the whole world dies
When love is done . . .

was true in the case of Althea. She had moral stamina enough to hate the wrong and love the right; enough even to refuse a half-love; but she was too weak to resist what seemed to be the current of fate.

She wondered ceaselessly what she was to do next, not realizing that our destiny stalks to meet us, and that there is no hole or corner of the earth which can hide us from its dread eye. And so it came to Althea in the old garden under the box trees, amid the booming of the bees.

One morning as she sat there a step on the path made her raise her eyes, and she saw before her Clarice Hilyer.

There was a moment of mutual astonished silence.

"What are you doing here?" exclaimed Althea.

Clarice's answer was ready. "I came in for a drink of water. I am stopping in the neighborhood."

Her voice was cool and steady, but her color ranged from red to pale.

Althea got up slowly. She was trembling. The two faced each other. It was no moment for convention—both felt that their naked souls were confronting each other. Althea burst out:

"Why did you ruin me? I never hurt you!"

Clarice stretched out her hand. "Sit down," she said, "you are very pale."

"How can I sit with you standing there?" answered Althea. She was ghastly, and Mrs. Hilyer half-expected to see her fall.

"Let us both sit," she said; "I must talk to you."

She led the way down the box walk to an arbor at the end, cut out of the living shrubs. Mechanically Althea followed—she was good at following—and they sat down. They were so near that their gowns touched. Clarice was lovely, blooming with health, irradiating charm; Althea pale, broken, disordered, and breathing painfully. What man would not have preferred Clarice?—yet she looked at the other woman and knew the one man in the world who meant anything to her despised her as much as he honored Althea.

"Listen!" she said. "You hate me, of course; you say I ruined you, but I swear I didn't mean to. I yielded to an impulse—an unworthy one—and then the trouble was done. I did not want to hurt you."

"Since you did hurt me it is all the same," said Althea. "I would not harm a woman—a poor, wretched creature who is born to suffer because she is a woman—no, not for all the world could give me—not to obtain my heart's desire."

"Your heart's desire!" said the

other. "Who ever gets that? I wonder what yours is?"

"I don't mind telling you," said Althea. "My heart's desire is to die here, quietly, as I sit, and be done with it all."

Clarice looked at her curiously.

"If I felt like that I should kill myself," she said.

"Ah, I have not your courage. You who could stab another woman in the dark could no doubt be brave enough to put yourself out of the world!"

Clarice was perfectly controlled.

"No wonder you are bitter!" she said. "You have a right to be, but I assure you again that I acted without thought. One thing I have done—I have not mentioned your name since then except with respect. I have killed any scandal I have heard. That much I've done for you."

"You are very kind," said Althea. "I wonder why you have done it."

A sudden rage for frankness took possession of Clarice—such a gust of impulse as shakes the most secretive of women at least once in a lifetime. She turned full on Althea.

"Because Moorlake asked me to protect you!" she said, deliberately.

Althea winced. "Moorlake!" she said.

"Yes; he came to me and—and—" Clarice colored and her eyes hardened at the recollection—"asked me—commanded me in his masterful way to stamp out the scandal."

"It was like him," said Althea, and her face became like that of the devotee before the shrine of his patron saint.

Clarice saw the look and bit her lip.

"He loves you!" she exclaimed.

Althea kept silence.

"He is coming here to-night—at least to Lord Parham's, where I'm stopping," Clarice said.

Then indeed Althea's calm broke. She half-rose, then sank back on the bench.

"Here!" she cried; "so near!"

"I shall see him to-night," said the other.

"Will you do me one favor—the

first—the last—I shall ever ask of you?" panted Althea. "Do *not* tell him that I am here!"

After all, Clarice was not a devil, though a jealous woman is first cousin to one. The utter prostration, physical and mental, pictured on her rival's face struck at her remnant of a heart.

"Is it possible," she said, "that you *wish* not to see him? to remain in hiding?"

"Oh, yes; I must not, *will* not see him!" cried Althea. "I have left the Vincents and tried to lose myself here. Do, for God's sake, help me! You have no reason to hate me; we are not rivals at all; Moorlake is above and beyond us both; he is not for either you or me. Only let me be quiet; perhaps I shall not trouble anyone long."

Clarice Hilyer was silent for a moment. Then she turned and laid her hand on Althea's knee.

"I am a wicked woman," she said, "and my cursed selfishness has ruined you; but I want you to believe that I will help you if I can. But I want you to tell me one thing. You are free now; if Clement Moorlake should ask you to marry him, could you say no?"

Enemy as she had been, there was now so much pity and good faith in Clarice's face that Althea could not choose but answer. Her pride in Clement's chivalry would not let her be silent. It was a small triumph, perhaps, but it was the only spot of light in her dark life—the only hour when she might prove herself a woman among a thousand. She fixed her eyes on Clarice's face.

"I have already refused him," she said.

Mrs. Hilyer sank back with a blank look.

"Mad woman!" she cried. "Refused Clement Moorlake! Why? why?"

"We are telling each other the truth to-day," said Althea. "I have not much pride left; I refused him because I knew he loved another woman."

"That is his secret! Ah, I thought

so. That explains everything. Yet he would have married you?"

"Yes, he would have married me."

Clarice hid her face in her hands; then she raised it, and her eyes were wet and shining.

"*That*," she said, her voice thrilling, "is love. I have seen it to-day for the first time. All my life I have known things that called themselves love—self-seeking, desire, passion, vanity, coquetry—but never the real thing. I have seen men who, when they had got what they wanted, rode away; women who added one conquest to another, so that they might count them like beads on a devil's rosary! But to-day I have found love. And it is too high for me."

There was a great stillness. A hard woman had been brushed by the shining wing of her guardian angel, and her heart was purified by the touch.

Presently she stretched out her hand to Althea.

"Tell me," she said, "what will you do? Have you money?"

"Enough."

"You are all alone, aren't you? Oh, I wish I could help you."

"You can—by keeping my secret. I demand it. I have the right."

"Yes, you have the right. I will keep it." Clarice stooped and kissed the thin hand. "Mrs. North, will you forgive me?" she asked.

"I would not hurt a hair of your head," said Althea.

Clarice rose. "I honor you, I respect you, and I will serve you whenever and however you choose."

And so they parted.

Althea knew that the time had come when she must again be moving. She must leave this green spot of earth and in the gray wilderness of London streets seek an inviolable hiding place.

XVIII

THE moon—a huge orange-colored August moon—flooded the old Tudor house and its surrounding park.

Lord Parham's guests had strayed out of doors after dinner, wooed by the gorgeous night. Some were walking in the Italian garden among quaint, clipped yews, pergolas and the slim white statues and urns that peeped forth from masses of late climbing roses. Others passed through the little gate that led to the wild part of the park. Among those were Moorlake and Clarice Hilyer.

He had discovered, with a shock of violent distaste, that she was one of the house party, and had resolved to leave next day. He had spent the past week in unavailing search for Althea, and felt unfit enough for visiting; nothing but the strongest necessity would have forced him to fulfil his engagement with the Parhams. He had conscientious scruples against breaking a promise if he could possibly keep it, and so found himself, weary and out of spirits, near the woman whom of all the world he disliked the most.

Her behavior had been perfect; though she sat beside him at dinner she talked for the most part with the man on the other side, who soon came under her charm.

Afterward, on the brow of the hill that overlooked the lower park, covered with gnarled old oaks and tall bracken, the two met again, quite by accident.

Clarice felt an almost uncontrollable impulse to tell him that within an hour's drive he could find the object of his search, for she was sure that he was seeking Althea. She conceived him to be urged only by a consuming desire to right the woman whom she had wronged; but what she did not know was that he was not alone prompted by honor—that something a thousand times warmer, and not less noble, was making every day's delay a year of torment to him.

Should she break her bad promise and betray the hiding place? Should she make Moorlake and Althea a present of each other? The eager questioning within her kept her tensely silent as she stood in the moonshine looking over the enchanted valley.

It was Clement who spoke first; they had not met since the unforgotten interview in Chelsea.

"What a pity no one can paint a moonlight scene," he observed.

"Many people think they can," said Clarice. "Do you know you have one fault?" she added.

"Only one?" said Clement, stiffly. "What has that to do with moonlight?"

"Nothing at all. But I could not help making the observation."

"You are always very frank with me. May I not hear what my fault is?"

"You have heard it before—intense conventionality. Just look at this situation. A wild park, bathed in moonlight. In the background a fine old Tudor mansion. On one side in the distance a herd of deer, two of them white and spectral in the moonlight. An old church on the other side. In the foreground an extremely handsome man with a face like a Lancelot turned Galahad; a not unprepossessing woman with bare shoulders and a pink chiffon gown. The man hates the woman and the woman fears the man. They are at swords' points. And at this supreme moment Sir Lancelot-Galahad makes a remark about moonlight!"

"That is an interesting picture—very," said Moorlake. "There are only one or two flaws in the description; for instance, 'the woman fears the man—I don't recognize the truth of that."

"Don't you? And yet you have great penetration."

"You have no reason to like me, but I can't imagine how you can fear me. If I had the power to injure you, you know quite well that I would not do it."

"I believe that, but one fears what one admires. You know persons preach about fearing God. I once asked my mother what that meant, and she said, 'fearing to offend Him.' Do you see?"

"I think you have quite atoned for your former strictures by comparing me to the Deity."

He smiled a little.

"It is blasphemous, isn't it?—but I don't mean badly. You have for me the aloofness and indifference of a god."

His smile grew more indulgent.

"Don't be foolish!" he said. "A god!—a poor, perplexed, faulty fool of a man, who doesn't know what to do next!"

He took a turn up and down the brow of the slope. She followed him with a sudden impulse.

"I think I can help you," she said.

He stood and looked down at her, paying an unwilling tribute to her prettiness and charm.

"I'm almost sure you can't," he said.

"Are you trying to find somebody?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Only because I want to know."

"I *am* trying to find someone. I wish it more than anything else on earth." He was very serious now.

"Have you searched all through the neighborhood?—at Bury, for instance?"

"Why do you ask that? What do you mean?" There was no disguising his eagerness. His eyes were shining.

Clarice smiled provokingly.

"I don't mean much! I'm cold. Shall we go back?"

"Listen!" he said. "You owe me something; you must tell me! Do you know? Have you seen—the person?"

"I went to Kennerton Farm this morning and drank a glass of water," she said.

She turned and walked slowly before him toward the house. He followed in a fever of impatience.

"Mrs. Hilyer! I ask you—I beg you—to tell me what you mean. Do I humble myself enough? Won't you tell me?"

She turned on him suddenly.

"No," she said, "not enough. You shall first tell me one thing: Do you love Mrs. North?"

He flushed deeply.

"You have no right to ask me

that. It is an intrusion," he exclaimed, his nostrils quivering and the old haughty look on his face.

"Perhaps you are right," said Clarice. "Forgive me—" and she walked on. She had never seen him so eager. It stabbed her to think that another woman was the cause of his unusual emotion. He still followed her, stifling his pride.

"Mrs. Hilyer," he said, as they paused at the gate, "there is, after all, no reason why I should not tell you. I love Althea North with all my heart and soul, and if I do not find her it will be the greatest sorrow of my life."

Clarice's face paled and contracted.

"Is it so serious?" she asked, in a low voice. "You really mean it? She is the happy woman?"

"It is very serious," he answered, "and she is the woman whom I shall try to make happy, if she will let me."

With a perceptible effort Clarice threw off her emotion.

"I can only tell you," she said, half-mockingly, "that the water at Kennerton Farm is very good. It will quench your thirst!" and she left him standing by the gate.

In the early morning he hurried away once more to seek Althea; and once more he was too late. She had left the farm.

XIX

A SMALL room over a baker's shop in Highbury was the next refuge.

Again mere chance had dictated choice. When Althea arrived in London she yielded to an impulse to drive through Chelsea, while she tried to decide on her next move. As the luggage-laden four-wheeler jogged along the King's Road, she prayed for a sign. Just before she came to the Vestry Hall, a blue Highbury "bus clattered by. It brought a sudden inspiration. Why not Highbury! It was remote, unfashionable—a perfect hiding place. What she should do when settled in this deadly suburb she did not ask herself;

she had become superstitious enough to take anything for a sign, and she at once bargained with her cabman to drive her to Highbury. It was an almost unwarrantable extravagance, for her stock of money was alarmingly low; but she dared not have her boxes sent after her, as they would afford a clue to her seeking friends.

It was not easy to find a lodging, but after a weary search Althea was at last able to install herself in the room over the bakery. The landlady regarded her with suspicion; nobody like that had ever before applied for a lodging. The amount of luggage, however, combined with a fortnight's rent in advance, overcame Mrs. Rose's scruples, and Althea took possession.

She could not improve the appearance of the room much, for with characteristic meanness Oliver North had ordered all her ornaments to be packed away where she could not gain access to them. She had only two treasures, and these she kept under lock and key. One was Violet's first shoe, the other a portrait of Clement which she had cut out of an illustrated weekly the year before, after her first meeting with him. It was so like that she dared not look at it now; but the little shoe she sometimes put under her pillow when she could not sleep. It seemed a talisman with power to calm and soothe. It is a characteristic of mother-love that it survives everything else. The child whom we have brought forth with unspeakable agony and inexpressible joy is inalienably ours. Man's love is selfish and transient; it may pass—nay, it surely will, for love between man and woman does not appear to have been created to stand the test of time; but nothing can take from a woman the unmixed rapture of her child's early years. No matter what the future may have in store—and life's one great certainty is suffering—there must always remain the memory of the little head that nestled in the mother's bosom, the little face that found for a time its God and its heaven in the mother's eyes.

August in London has none of the charm of August in Sussex. The heat, the dust, the dull roll of the 'buses, the sharp clatter of the carts, the poor food, the dingy surroundings, the absence of occupation and diversion—all these made up a daily life that sapped such strength and hope as remained to Althea.

She failed to realize how unhappy she had made Nellie and Bertie, and even Moorlake. Every day in the "agony column" of the *Times* appeared a poignant appeal to her to return. It was so worded that she alone would have recognized it—but she never saw the *Times*.

She forced herself to walk a little each day, resting sometimes on a bench in the little park near her lodging. For hours she would sit at the open windows of her room watching the 'buses go by. Their clatter seemed to say: "We can take you to Clement! We can take you to Clement!" For a few pence she could have gone to Chelsea. One day the desire became too strong; she hailed a blue 'bus—had her foot on the step, and then, as the horses started, withdrew it, almost falling to the gutter. The conductor exclaimed angrily, but she did not heed—once more she had conquered.

In September she went to the city and saw her solicitor. He gave her the money she needed—more than usual, for he had contrived to squeeze something out of North—and told her that Moorlake and the Vincents had come to him more than once to inquire if he had seen her.

"You must at least let me assure them that you are safe and well," he said, thinking, as he looked at her, that her days were numbered.

"You may do that, if you like," she said, listlessly. "But you must keep my secret. I will never go back while there is a chance of meeting Mr. Moorlake."

Then she spoke of Violet and asked what prospect there was of her ever seeing the child again, but he could give her little comfort.

When they parted he said: "For-

give me for saying it, but you are in the wrong."

"Perhaps I am," she assented, dully, "but I can't do otherwise."

"You should see Mr. Moorlake once more, at least," he urged.

She shook her head sadly.

"I prefer the guillotine to Chinese torture," she said, and so left him.

Physically she was near the end of her tether. One day in October it did not seem worth while to get up. It was a dull, lowering day with a foretaste of Winter fog in the air. The reek of chimneys mingled with the pleasant smell of fresh bread coming from the bakery below. Althea lay in the narrow iron bed with its coarse sheets, gray with the London blight, and stared at the little room. In the window was a rickety dressing-table, the mirror of which had to be coaxed with a wad of paper to remain at a useful angle. There was a band of brassy metal across the top of the lower window sash, holding a short Nottingham lace curtain that had also the dim bloom of soot upon it. There were a chest of drawers, two chairs, a washstand furnished with odd pieces of china and with two flabby gray towels on the rail; the paper was a washable "sanitary" one with a maddening pattern in dull brown; the carpet was worn, faded and grimed to an even, despondent tone.

"What a room to die in!" thought Althea, for she hoped that her intense lassitude might foretell dissolution. She remembered the white enameled wood and pale blue chintz of her bedroom in Pont street, and the irony of life in general and hers in particular made her smile bitterly.

Mrs. Rose hustled in with the breakfast. Several weeks of prompt payment and unimpeachable respectability of conduct had softened her commercial heart.

"Well, I'm sure," she exclaimed, setting down the tray on a chair, "you don't look up to much this morning!"

"No, I'm not," said Althea. "I

think I shall stay in bed a little while."

"Why should you get up? Your life isn't so busy, is it? Not much to stir you up like, is there?" responded Mrs. Rose. "I always wonder how you do get through the days."

Althea began pouring out the tea, which was always fresh and good. As she turned, a little shoe fell out from under the pillow.

Mrs. Rose's face kindled with interest.

"Oh, the dear little shoe!" she exclaimed, picking it up. "Did that belong to a child of yours, ma'am?"

A sudden flush surged over Althea's face and weak tears trickled from her lashes.

"There, there!" said the landlady, "I didn't ought to 'a' been so sudden! Perhaps the poor little darling's in heaven."

Althea lost all her self-control; all the silence, privation, repression of the past two months rolled up and crushed her. A tidal wave of emotion seemed rearing its crest and tumbling nearer and nearer till it broke over her and, breaking, blotted out the world. By night she was delirious.

Such a thing had never before occurred in Mrs. Rose's household since she had let lodgings. She was extremely embarrassed, and no less sympathetic. She turned for advice to Mr. Rose, whom she was not apt to honor in that way. He was a slow man, and took time to consider. Next morning, after his wife had had a sleepless night, watching in Althea's room, he mildly suggested a doctor.

The medical man, when he came, pronounced the patient very ill, and asked if she had any friends or relatives. Then again the Roses were nonplussed. What clue was there for them to go by? A baby's shoe afforded no useful evidence. But as Althea grew worse the doctor became more urgent. He pressed Mrs. Rose to examine all Mrs. North's belongings in search of information.

"Which I feels like a thief," observed the landlady, as, within sound

of the patient's ravings, she turned over the contents of the boxes.

There was nothing to assist her. Only one small box, which was locked, looked hopeful.

"But I can't hardly break it open," said the reluctant Mrs. Rose.

"I can—and will," said the doctor, who had the worst possible opinion of Althea's condition.

When the lid of the box flew open it disclosed only the newspaper portrait of Clement Moorlake, with the name beneath.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Rose. "The poor thing's husband, I suppose."

But the doctor was a man who knew a thing or two, though he did live in Highbury. He had heard of Moorlake. He went and consulted the Red Book, discovered where the sculptor lived, and then wrote him a note.

Next day Althea's fever abated, but her weakness was pitiable. Pulse there was next to none; the overtaxed nerves, the impoverished blood, were taking their revenge. She was conscious, but was too far gone to show that she was. Toward afternoon she felt a soft hand on her forehead and smelt a delicate fragrance like that of fresh violets—an odor that contended triumphantly with the bread and the soot. She did not want to know who it was—it might be her long-dead mother come to welcome her into the other world.

The hand came and went, but the violets stayed. Once or twice she heard a voice—very far off, but very familiar. She could not connect it with any person she had known, yet its tones brought a curious, vague comfort that curled round her scarce beating heart and warmed it. Then she began to understand—she was dead, and the kind spirits who had carried her away were letting her rest and gain strength before entering on the new life. She liked being dead. She felt warm and clean and comfortable; only, of course, being dead, she could not move at all, just at first. One of the spirits fed her very often,

and if she had been alive, she would have said that she swallowed beef tea sometimes and sometimes brandy, but she supposed that must be a delusion, because the dead do not eat.

Then there came a day when somebody kindly took the weights off her eyes. The lids quivered and opened a little. It was morning, and a little light struggled in. A form wonderfully like an earthly woman, in a white cap and apron, stood by the bed.

"She is sensible," murmured the woman.

A deep breath was drawn by someone else near by. Althea searched for her voice, so long unused that she seemed to have mislaid it.

"Not dead?" she said, so softly it was a wonder anybody heard it.

But the white-capped person bent over her and the voice of someone else said, very low: "Thank God!"

Then Althea's eyes opened wider, and she saw Nellie.

XX

CAMPDEN HILL once more—love, friendship, security, home! Slowly Althea struggled back to life; slowly, yet with a sweetness, a serenity that she had not known before.

For she had looked life and death in the face and had learned her lesson, the truth the world holds for every one of us, that we can none of us be perfectly happy, but that we can all be brave and patient.

No hint of Clement's new-born love had come to her. Nellie was pledged to silence—indeed, absolute reticence was enforced by Althea, who would not hear Clement's name.

But the time came at last when the secret was to be made manifest.

One afternoon in December Althea sat in the morning-room, which seemed inexpressibly restful and beautiful after the Highbury lodging. She was still pale and thin, but not white and wasted as she had been two months before. It was pleasant to sit looking into the fire, thinking about nothing. She had learned how

to do that, and found it a wholesome accomplishment. When ugly, wearing thoughts put up their heads she promptly extinguished them. To-day she was all peace. Nellie had left her for half an hour, but presently she returned and began to make tea. She was far from calm, and clattered about among the tea things in an unusual manner.

"Where have you been, Nellie?" asked her friend. "I'm like a baby without its nurse when you leave the room."

"I had a caller," answered Nellie.

"A woman or a man?"

"A man."

"Someone you like?"

"Yes; and it's lucky I do like him, as he has been here in the last two months just fifty times."

"Good gracious! He must be in love with you."

"Not with *me*."

Something in the tone made Althea turn in her deep chair and look at Mrs. Vincent.

"Nellie . . ." she began.

"It's no use," broke out Nellie; "you've *got* to see him!"

Althea half-rose. "If you begin that . . ." she said.

Nellie was almost stern. She left the tea table, came over to Althea, and stood with her hand gently pressing her back into her chair.

"Althea," she said, gravely, "you are strong enough now to hear what Clement has to say. It is unfair to him to refuse. He is the loyalest, finest creature I've ever known. Any woman would die for him gladly if she loved him, and even if you don't you have no right to deny him a hearing."

"If I don't!" said Althea, slowly. She was looking up into Nellie's eyes, but she covered her face after a moment with her thin hand. "I thought you understood," she said, with something of the old weakness.

"I thought so, too, dear," said Nellie. "But everything is changed. He has come here nearly every day, hoping and praying to see you—to tell you . . . He is here now."

Althea made a movement as if to escape, but all at once Moorlake was in the room—was beside her—near, near, with both her hands in his, and Nellie was gone.

"Forgive me," he said, softly; "I could not wait another minute."

He was half-kneeling beside her, still holding her hands. Of all she had had to bear this was the strangest, the sweetest, the bitterest, for it was like life and death together. All the sorrow, the joy, the mystery and the fulness of a whole existence were in that moment, in that touch. In an instant her blood leaped and her heart bounded. For something in Clement was changed—something had gone, and something was come in its place. His old look she knew, but not this. On that face which she had loved better than happiness she had seen pity, kindness, affection; but now, unless her senses were fatally mistaken, here was love—a love such as few women ever win and fewer still contrive to keep. His clasp sent fresh, full life through her veins. She did not know the meaning of it all, and so she only sat still, finding it joy enough to feel, without knowing.

"My dear, my dear," he said, "may

I tell you now? Are you strong? Can you listen?"

She only smiled assent—such a strange smile, like that of one who sees the heavens open, but knows not if the revelation be for him or another.

"Oh, Althea! how I have searched for you! and how I have loved you!"

"Loved me?" she said, softly.

"Yes; loved," he answered, vehemently, "as I never knew I could love."

"I can't believe—I dare not." She gently drew her hand away.

"You send me away?" he cried.

"No—no! Stay—but tell me—make me understand."

And then he told her everything—of his love, his long misplaced loyalty, his sudden disillusion. In that ardent, hurried story lay the recompense for all she had suffered. When it was over, he knelt once more beside her and asked her for an answer.

"Do you love me?" he said; "did you ever love me?"

But there are truths that need no telling. Here at last she was in his arms, not pitied, but loved. It was more than she could bear. Her head drooped—her eyes closed—closed, as he feared, forever. But the weakness passed.



EQUIVOCAL ENTHUSIASM

HUSBAND—To-day I met a gentleman who told me he was engaged to you at one time.

WIFE—What did you say?
"I congratulated him, of course."



JUST HIS LUCK

WILLIS—A funny thing happened when Hawkins swore off swearing.

WALLACE—What was that?

WILLIS—He had an attack of golf fever.

THE PANSY PRINCESS

PURPLE and gold as sunset of the North,
 Thou Pansy, tell what thought lies hid in thee;
 Dost dream upon a time when knights went forth
 The pomp and splendor of thy court to see?

In trailing robes of satin and brocade,
 Didst reign a queen o'er nations wild and vast,
 Till ruthless Time decreed their suns should fade,
 Their glories be but ashes of the past?

Close to thy side, all fierce in black and gold,
 A pansy warrior guards thee still with care;
 Dost thou recall a day when, over-bold,
 He wooed thee with the sunlight on his hair?

And near in shadow, pale as some sweet saint,
 A snow-white pansy opens to the day—
 A pious nun with pallid lips and faint,
 Who bows her head the while she seems to pray.

For thee, O pagan princess of the dawn,
 For thee, O warrior knight of valorous deeds,
 The pale nun prays, with downcast face and wan,
 While through her fingers slip the silent beads.

And is it true that all the prayer and love,
 And all the wealth and worldliness of powers,
 When centuries have come and gone, will prove
 Mere memories in thoughtful pansy flowers?

GERTRUDE NERES.



WASTING WORDS

BISHOP—Why didn't you tell Robinson he was a liar?
 BROOKS—It wouldn't have done any good. He has told me I am one many a time.



BUT ONE INFERENCE

FLORA (*who is engaged to Arthur*)—Has Arthur ever proposed to you?
 CARRIE—Well, it amounted to a proposal. He asked me if I thought he could do better than marry you.

THE MADNESS OF ISHTAR

By Bliss Carman

VERMILION and ashen and azure,
Pigment of leaf and wing,
What will the sorceress Ishtar
Make out of color and Spring?

Of old was she not Aphrodite,
She who is April still,
Mistress of longing and beauty,
The sea and the Hollow Hill?

Ashtoreth, Tanis, Astarte—
A thousand names she has borne
Since the first new moon's white magic
Was laid on a world forlorn.

Odor of tulip and cherry,
Scent of the apple blow,
Tang of the wild arbutus—
These to her crucible go.

Honey of lilac and willow,
The spoil of the plundering bees,
Savor of sap from the maples—
What will she do with these?

Oboe and flute in the forest,
And pipe in the marshy ground,
And the upland call of the flicker—
What will she make of sound?

Start of the green in the meadow,
Push of the seed in the mould,
Burst of the bud into blossom—
What will her cunning unfold?

The waning belt of Orion,
The crescent zone of the moon—
What is the mystic transport
We shall see accomplished soon?

The sun and the rain and the south wind,
 With all the treasure they bring—
 What will the sorceress Ishtar
 Make from the substance of Spring?

She will gather the blue and the scarlet,
 The yellow and crimson dye,
 And weave them into a garment
 Of magical texture and ply.

And whoso shall wear that habit
 And favor of the earth,
 He shall be lord of his spirit,
 The creatures shall know his worth.

She will gather the broken music,
 Fitting it chord by chord,
 Till the hearer shall learn the meaning,
 As a text that has been restored.

She will gather the fragrance of lilacs,
 The scent of the cherry flower,
 And he who perceives it shall wonder,
 And know, and remember the hour.

She will gather the moonlight and starshine,
 And breathe on them with desire,
 And they shall be changed on the moment
 To the marvel of earth's green fire.

The ardor that kindles and blights not,
 Consumes and does not destroy,
 Renewing the world with wonder,
 And the hearts of men with joy.

For this is the purpose of Ishtar,
 In her great lone house of the sky,
 Beholding the work of her hands
 As it shall be by-and-bye:

Out of the passion and splendor,
 Faith, failure and daring, to bring
 The illumined dream of the spirit
 To perfection in some far Spring.

Therefore, shall we not obey her—
 Awake and be glad and aspire—
 Wise with the ancient knowledge,
 Touched with the earthly fire?

In the spell of the wild enchantment
 The shy wood creatures know,
 Must we not also with Ishtar
 Unhindered arise and go?

Hearing the call and the summons,
 Heeding the hint and the sign,
 Rapt in the flush and the vision,
 Shall we demur or repine?

Dare you deny one impulse,
 Dare I one joy suppress—
 Knowing the might and dominion,
 The lure and the loveliness?

Delirium, glamour, bewitchment,
 Bidding earth blossom and sing,
 Shall we falter or fail to follow
 The voice of our mother in Spring?

For Love shall be clothed with beauty,
 And walk through the world again,
 Hearing the haunted cadence
 Of an immortal strain;

Caring not wheace he wandered,
 Fearing not whither he goes,
 Great with the fair new freedom
 That every earth child knows;

Impetuous as the wood wind,
 Ingenuous as a flower,
 Glad with the fulness of being,
 Born of the perfect hour;

Counting not cost nor issue,
 Weighing not end and aim,
 Sprung from the clay-built cabin
 To powers that have no name.

And with all his soul and body
 He shall only seek one thing.
 For that is the madness of Ishtar,
 Which comes upon earth in Spring.



WISEACREAGE

IT'S a wise child that makes cowards of us all.
 How can we look for change when we're always here and it's always
 now?

This is a world of sin and misery. Sin is man's share, and misery
 woman's.

The modern poet achieves a penciled sonnet to a penciled eyebrow.
 Heart hunger is not so bad as heart indigestion.

Our aspirations frequently turn out to be exasperations.

Love is the one window through which the Finite may catch a glimpse
 of the Infinite.

CAROLYN WELLS.

TO YOU

GOD made the rose time of the year, the June
 Of realized bud and blossoming fulfilled;
 O'er all the land His fragrances He spilled,
 And taught each bird a newer, gladder tune.
 He heaped upon the earth the radiant boon
 Of rose on rose, till each sad corner thrilled
 With fragrancing, and all its woes were stilled;
 Then over all He set the jewel moon,
 And flashed the silver stars across the sky.
 So all the gracious glory of the year
 Created He, and knowing it must die
 And earth again must know dark days and drear,
 He fashioned it a symbol, and there grew
 Beneath His fingers the dear form of you!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



COLD COMFORT

NERVOUS PASSENGER—Captain, what would be the result if this boat should strike an iceberg?
CAPTAIN—It would probably shiver its timbers.



REASON FOR REJOICING

WILLIS—You seem to have a good opinion of the faith cure.
WALLACE—Well, why shouldn't I? It cured me of the patent medicine habit.



MIRACLE

THAT in your absence I can feel this thrill,
 Pulsing my inmost soul; that I can know
 Such wonder and such ecstasy, until
 I marvel at the heights whereto I go,

Deem it not strange, belovèd; every hour
 Is white with consecration ever new,
 And in my heart there blooms, like some glad flower,
 The radiant and lovely thought of you!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

VANITY SQUARE

By Edgar Saltus

“WE authors,” Beaconsfield is rumored to have remarked in the course of a conversation with the Queen; and though the plural was singular, it is rumored, too, that with it he flattered her basely. It is rumored also that nothing ever flattered her more except when he made her Empress of India. These rumors are repeated for what they are worth. One of them relates to an incident that occurred a long time ago, and may not have occurred at all. Even so, and even otherwise, a point remains. Titles appeal to women. They are highly decorative, very becoming, serviceable in more ways than one. They may not, perhaps, lessen the length of the ears, but the attendant tiaras conceal that. *C'est déjà beaucoup.* The taste is not limited to women, either. On the other side there are men who would not know how to get along without them. They secure credit from tradesmen and attention from heiresses. What more could the heart desire? In the circumstances a bill recently submitted to the Italian Parliament merits consideration.

The measure provides that in exchange for coin titles may be transmuted. After all, why not? The difference between mister and monseigneur is not of a nature to weigh with a sturdy American, but in the smart set it tickles the girls. Every one of them loves a lord, though it is not every one of them who has a lord to love.

The bill, then, is sufficiently praiseworthy. What it lacks is utility. Since the beginning of years and the beginning of things titles have been pur-

chasable in Italy. They could be had in the Rome of the Cæsars as well as in the Rome of the Saints. There are at this minute a hundred princes who for a hundred dollars are not only able but anxious to supply them. The process, legally catalogued as adoption, has been performed again and again. For that matter, a New York woman who shall be nameless secured here, for causes that shall be nameless also, a divorce and journeyed abroad. Whether or not she collaborated in a theory we have long entertained, to the effect that a woman who marries a second time does not deserve to have lost her first husband, is immaterial. The point is that, discovering the name she bore—at arm's length—had its disadvantages, she purchased the right to be known and addressed as Princess. Principessa della Luna Bianca, let us say. A year passed. Two, perhaps. Ultimately it fell about that at some function or other a man who had been introduced gazed musingly at her and asked if he had not had the pleasure of meeting her somewhere before. The Princess smiled and tapped him with her fan. “Why, yes, indeed; don't you remember? You used to be my husband.”

The story has a moral, as all proper stories should have. Titles ought to be purchasable here. Such an arrangement would enable women to dispense with husbands. That in itself is enough to commend it. Society would be delightful were women all married and all men single. But the idea has another charm. It would check the export of heiresses. The latter are at a premium. Commercially speaking, the demand

exceeds the supply. There are not enough to go around. As a consequence, in the absence of a measure such as we have suggested, we see no good and valid reason why another should not be passed inhibiting their abduction. A bill of this kind would not interfere with the tariff, and might increase the revenue. It would be a protective measure of the proper sort. The open door is all very well, but not where our girls are concerned.

Girls, though, are so constituted that there is no arguing with them. They believe in free trade. From certain statistics and studies we are enabled to infer that they believe in titles also. And very logically. A title can be divided. A duke makes a duchess, whereas a man of brains cannot share his intellect with a fool. Were it otherwise strawberry leaves might cease to appeal.

Yet were things otherwise than as they are life might be fair as a dream. Obviously, it is just the reverse. A woman's heart, for instance—or, more exactly, the heart of a pretty woman—is a bonbon wrapped in riddles. A fool may stop to solve, but a wise man nibbles away. And very good it tastes, too, until indigestion ensues, and he turns to other fare. For the devil of it is that no man can subsist on one dish. However delicious the dish may be, the hour comes when it palls. Muhammad probably understood the fact when he promised to the faithful throughout all eternity a fresh houri every day. Every day is perhaps excessive. Moreover, an eternal feast might prove as distressing as an eternal fast. Yet we assume there was to be nothing compulsory in the matter and that the faithful could diet if they chose. "Not too much of anything," said a profound epicure; and whether served with riddles or without, a variety of bonbons, even in courses, even in Paradise, must become as indigestible as the repetition of one particular sweet.

This is not right. It is not right that man should be so constituted

that he needs must weary, not merely of one dish but of all. *Mais que veux-tu que voilà!* Against this sorry scheme of things novelists without number and poets without publishers have spawned copy by the ton. Quite unavailingly, too. Nobody by taking pen and paper can add a charm to a statue. Life is just about as hard. And yet were it not for its pleasures it might be endurable. Were it not that the things we like are either iniquitous or injurious we might pull through. Even otherwise we are bound to lose our illusions, and what is worse, our umbrellas and our hair. The scheme is, indeed, sorry, particularly when you consider that the world is filled with charming people whom we never meet—except in a few memoirs that are out of print and a few operas that are out of date. Ballets, indeed, occasionally present them, especially the variety known to foreigners as *feeries*, that are delightful comminglings of fair faces, lips of silk, incandescent eyes, skirts of tulle, shuttled with clinging measures, sudden caresses, startling flowers, auroras and apotheoses. Representations of this order are really consolatory. They fascinate the eye, release the imagination and send it vagabonding afar through the marvels of lands where dreams come true.

"*O Paradis*," the tenor sings in the last act of "*L'Africaine*," "*O Paradis, sorti de l'onde*." There it is, and without the nuisance, too, of assisting at the soprano's demise under an upas tree. In these lands there is nothing of that kind—at most the spectacle of a faithless favorite sewn in a sack and tossed by your hurrying eunuchs into the deep and indifferent sea. That, though, is a sight very dreamlike and agreeable to contemplate. So, too, are the caravans of Circassians, the swaying palanquins, the sombre and splendid bazaars. The turbans of the merchants that pass are heavy with sequins and secrets. The pale mouths of the blue-bellied fish that rise from the sleeping waters are aglow with gems. In courtyards

tapestried with cashmeres, chimeras and hippogriffs await your approach. In the air is the odor of spices, the scent of the wines of Schiraz. The silence is threaded with the hum of harps, with the murmur of kisses and flutes. The days are grooved with alternating delights; they detain, indeed, but the nights enthrall. There are a thousand and one of them, and they are the preludes to the *Pays des Songes*.

Before entering a mosque the Moslem leaves his slippers at the door. Before entering Fairyland leave stocks in the Street, perplexities behind, and with them the usual collection of unhallowed ruminations. These things are as sacrilegious as automobiles would be. They are out of place in a land where the palace of the White Cat rears its enchanted turrets to the sky, where at any moment you may stumble over the *Belle au Bois Dormant*, find Cinderella's little foot in your hand, encounter the seduction of sylphs, the witchery of the willis, feel the April of their lips on yours, taste the rapture of life as it ought to be, the savor of immaculate joy.

Before Tahiti was vulgarized by Loti, and Bora Bora took to moral corsets, it is possible that the savor was apprehensible there. It is possible that in some of the untrotted islands of the South Seas an illusion of it stills subsists. But elsewhere it has gone. Even the ballet does not produce it any more. It has vacated the earth as beauty will do. Progress is too utilitarian for either. What progress does not need it lops. It has made it easy to travel and nowhere to travel to. Enchantments have evaporated, hippogriffs are no more. The sky has changed colors with it. There are scenes as there are sorceries that have gone from us forever. There are advertisements where there were witcheries, commerce where there were caprices, patent medicines in lieu of enthralments, the shriek of steam where sylphs have strayed. The one place in which the past and the poetry of it persevere is the neigh-

borhood of thrones. There is the ideal's last refuge. There, too, is the Mecca of Vanity Square.

Those who want to get there and can't, catalogue as snobbish those who can and do. Everything being possible, the cataloguing may be exact. But snobbishness is not appreciated at its worth. It is something very commendable. Snobbish people are always trying to appear other than what they are, and the effort is certainly virtuous. Contentment is a very degraded condition. It is bovine. Discontent is a most reassuring sign. People are always discontented when they are trying to improve. The desire for improvement is an aspiration, and what aspiration more praiseworthy can there be than the ambition to look down on your neighbor? Call it snobbish if you will, but recognize that snobbishness has its merits.

Courts, too, have theirs. Yet if we may believe what we hear, and that is always such a pleasure, they are not what they were. Those who frequent them take a succulent satisfaction in relating the disillusionments they have met. Even so, apart from the ballet, they are the sole resorts capable of suggesting Fairyland now. It is unfortunate that Mr. Cook is not in a position to supply round-trip tickets to them, but progress aiding, no doubt that enterprise will come. Meanwhile, one of the easiest passports being a title, it is only natural that the latter should appeal.

There are, though, titles and titles. A year or two ago the *Revue des Revues* demonstrated that those promenaded by members of the Jockey, the Pommes de Terre and the Cercle de la Rue Royale were not worth the cards on which they were printed; that there was not an authentic noble in the lot. The demonstration was denounced as unpatriotic. We saw it alleged that it was calculated to throw a scare into the hearts of American girls, who, being heavy consumers, had largely increased the national wealth. At the time this argument did not seem to appeal to our friend

and brother-in-letters, M. Henri Rochefort. "Should it occur," he declared, "should the hour come when our sprigs of nobility are no longer purchased by exotic quails, I, for one, would not weep for grief." And M. Rochefort added: "The idle descendant of a Crusader is a sucking pig. The female Yankee is a peacock. What good can such a couple work? There may have been unions between them which have not turned out badly, yet in that case the parties have been more lucky than wise."

M. Rochefort was quite right. It was, of course, very rude of him to call our heiresses names. Besides, admitting them to be quails, they can't be peacocks also. That is impossible. Ornithology is unacquainted with any such fowl. But he scored a point. To us as to him the heiress is a *rara avis*. Hence the beauty of the measures which we have suggested. Hence the *pro bono publicanism* of them, too. Though we have lost our bisons let us preserve our birds—from Frenchmen, at least, and while we are at it, from all other foreigners as well.

A good motto for those birds might be: *Evitez les étrangers en général et les Français en cabinet particulier*. Russians especially, though very taking, should be admired with circumspection and avoided with care. They are all princes, and we know what the Bible says about them. If we have our facts correctly—and if not it would not surprise us—their prevalence is due to some old ruffian of a Tsar who in a drunken fit ordered every hereditary title, save those appertaining to his own family, abolished and the documents relating to them destroyed. These titles some successor or other restored, but as the original grants were no longer in existence, everybody who possessed the energy was free to put in a claim. From the results we should judge that the number of persons possessing that energy must have been inordinate.

German titles are not advantageous, either. When authentic they are awkward, and local purchasers are not in

favor in Berlin. The Kaiser calls them *gemeine Amerikanerinnen*. English titles, though they come higher, provide more for the money. They are, perhaps, the best. But though the best, we cannot regard them as desirable for our girls. When obtained, certain results have occasionally ensued. In these instances the party of the second part is usually a duke who in other circumstances would prefer to follow a fashion set by his ancestors and get a bride from among the nobility of his land. But the nobility is poor, the castle is crumbling, the moat is choked, sheriffs are passing over the drawbridge, there are no warders to guard it any more. In short, there are ways and means to be considered, and who can supply them so well as a nice little American girl!

That little girl is not merely nice; she is charming. She never omits to have in her that which will make a duchess worthy of the strawberry leaves. And so quickly does she assimilate the conditions of her new existence that no one suspects her origin, no one dreams that she once had a twang, that she lived in a land of savages and dressed in feathers and bead. No; no one knows it except the duke, and he is too ducal to tell, too considerate to let anyone suppose that, among the redskins where he found her, had she not had bag upon bag of wampum he would have rubbed noses and passed on his way. And he is very sweet to that little girl, very loving, very thoughtful, very courteous, until it occurs to him that there are other women in the land, that a duke acknowledges to himself but one law—his pleasure, and to his duchess but one duty—neglect. And presently in the castle, rebuilt now and rewardered, yet so far from the long grass and palm trees of home, that little girl will sit and weep, and if she is a good little girl, as all nice little American girls are supposed to be, she will sit and weep alone.

The tableau is affecting, yet hardly emulative. But then, arrangements

of this kind do not always turn out so badly. On the contrary, they turn out worse. The parties to them yawn in each other's face.

Such are the conditions in Vanity Square. When those who dwell there are not up to some devilishness they are bound to be alarmingly dull.



SHE IS NOT FAIR

SHE is not fair to other eyes,
No poet's dream is she,
Nor artist's inspiration, yet
I would not have her be.
She wanders not through princely halls,
A crown upon her hair;
Her heart awaits a single king
Because she is not fair.

Dear lips, your half-shy tenderness
Seems far too much to win;
Yet has your heart a tiny door
Where I may peep within?
That voiceless chamber, dim and sweet,
I pray may be my own;
Dear little Love, may I come in
And make you mine alone?

She is not fair to other eyes,
I would not have it so;
She needs no further charm or grace,
Nor aught wealth may bestow;
For when the lovelight shines and makes
Her dear face glorified—
Ah, sweetheart, queens may come and go
And all the world beside!

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



THOUGHTFUL PRECAUTION

SHE—Love is blind, you know.
HE (*rising*)—Yes, but your neighbors are not. May I pull down the blinds?



WILES OF THE TEMPTER

FLORA—Has old Mr. Moneybags given you any encouragement?
BESSIE—I regarded it as such. He told me it made him feel ten years older to be with me.

ERE THE KING WEARIED

I KNOW not fear, regret, nor grief nor tears,
 Who sit and broider in my 'customed place;
 I grow nor old nor young throughout the years—
 They say he hath not yet forgot my face.

I mind me of my fleeting dream of bliss,
 Ere, watching close, I saw without surprise,
 As tenderly he leaned to take my kiss,
 A flicker of the shade across his eyes.

Enough! I turned and held my head above
 The courtiers' gibes, before my reign was spent,
 Swept past the Queen whose fetters killed his love,
 And ere the King was weary—free, I went.

I called my page to bring my palfrey white,
 At dusk we turned us on our homeward way;
 My father's castle dawned upon our sight
 Before the night had yielded to the day.

Then slipped I from the saddle and alone
 Walked onward toward the hill where I was born,
 And unaffrighted spake in calmest tone
 To those who barred my way with looks of scorn:

“Kinsmen, ye sent me forth to win
 A knight to claim my hand,
 Ye sent me forth, and I have won
 The highest in the land.

“I know no rival, sirs, not I,
 For still his love I hold—
 Unheard his messages, I went
 Before his heart grew cold.

“I took nor gold nor title vain;
 To love him was my will.
 Of gifts that he sends after me,
 Take, an ye wish, your fill.

“I would there throbbed beneath my heart
 (It may not be, alas!)
 That which should live to prove his claim—
 Stand back, and let me pass!”

FLORENCE SCOLLARD BROWN.

THE VAN KUYPER VERDICT

By Fanny Gregory Sanger

THE Van Kuypers were the patriarchal family of New Haarlem. Not, be it understood, one of the oldest, but the very oldest, dating back not only to the Van Kuyper who was a burgomaster when Petrus Stuyvesant was Governor of New Amsterdam, but to the still more remote ancestor who had been a linen merchant in the old Dutch city of Haarlem.

It was in honor of that Haarlem that his American descendant, when he divided his big New Jersey farm into town lots, named the city that has since become so prosperous and renowned.

It is not strange, therefore, that the Van Kuypers felt a very justifiable pride in themselves.

The present family represented the seventeenth authentic generation, the ninth American one, and the seventh to live in the old homestead, and were naturally conscious of their superiority to the common run of mortals, unfortunate beings who actually boasted if they had a grandfather, and in the majority of cases seemed oblivious to the fact that the human race dated more than two generations back.

The last Van Kuyper, Van Horn of that name, earned the deepest commiseration of all his admiring and respectful neighbors when his wife, who had been a Stuyvesant, presented him with ten daughters and never a son to perpetuate the family name and fame.

Oh, the pity of it! This was the greatest misfortune that had ever befallen this great and famous family, whose immunity from the ill-luck attendant on ordinary people was at-

tributed by them, and no doubt justly, to the reverence—which I would remind you Webster defines as “fear mingled with respect and esteem”—to the great reverence with which even the fickle goddess, Fortune, regarded them.

Of course the inevitable sorrows of death and illness had descended on them, but even nature had been kind, and the Van Kuypers were a notoriously long-lived race. It was a matter of record that there had never been a hunchback, a harelip, a goitre or a squint known among them, only a moderate number of fools, and those only on the distaff side. Could record be cleaner?

The Van Kuypers knew it was entirely to the richness of the purple fluid that coursed in their veins that they owed these uncommon blessings, and now, at this late day, despite the wonderful progress of the nineteenth century, in the great and productive days of invention, science and the arts, at the very time when the most was expected from the head of the family, to have such a calamity befall him as the birth of ten daughters filled all who knew him with consternation and dismay.

That the twentieth century should dawn and no male heir appear to carry the name to future generations! It was a disaster! a catastrophe! a cataclysm!

Six only of the girls had survived infancy, and poor Mrs. Van Kuyper, as she contemplated these six robust maidens, felt herself little short of criminal. She, poor soul, had struggled nobly to do her duty. Year after year she had faithfully brought a

promise to the Van Kuypers; year after year there had been a certain period of joyful expectation, only to eventuate, as in the case of the immortal firm of *Dombe& Son*, in "a daughter after all."

It was many years now since there had been even a promise, and Mrs. Van Kuyper, saturated with the traditions of seventeen generations, felt she really ought to die and so make room for a younger wife who might redeem those ten awful blunders of hers; but she was a singularly healthy soul, and so lived on, while the girls waxed to womanhood, with the hope remaining to the family that one at least of the girls would marry an accommodating man who would consent to assume the family name and so save it from extinction.

There was Lysbet, the eldest, a typical Van Kuyper, tall, robust and fair, with the high forehead and round, Dutch face of her distinguished ancestors. Lysbet had married a Van Hoesen, a man with a mind and a lineage of his own, and so foolishly proud and stubborn that nothing could induce him to see the advantages of changing his name, so that his five sturdy sons were Van Hoesens, and his pretty daughter, Duvertie, would be also a Van Hoesen until some fortunate man decreed otherwise.

Christina, the second daughter, earned the family displeasure by uniting her fortunes to a plain James Smith, whose redeeming feature was a plethoric bank account that had been accumulated by the offensive Smith's own personal efforts. This very unwelcome member of the family, this intruder into the sacred precincts of ancestry, had all the stiff-necked stubbornness of the parvenu, and flatly declined in very inelegant and forcible terms to change his name; hence it was a source of intense gratification to them all that Christina redeemed herself by having only one child, and that a girl.

Anneke was Mrs. Petrus Duy Kinck, a colorless sort of person, and foolish enough to consider Duy Kinck quite

as good a name for her small boys and girls as Van Hoesen.

Gertruyd was a childless widow again betrothed, so the hopes of the family were centred in Katrinka, the fifth daughter, and Janettie, the sixth, who were as yet unmarried.

Janettie was still in the schoolroom, but Katrinka, between whom and her younger sister the four little victims of cholera infantum had blossomed and perished, was twenty-nine years of age, and horror of horrors! verging on spinsterhood, and the family felt this almost as they did the fact that there was no male heir.

Katrinka was more typically Dutch than the Zuyder Zee—so short, so rotund, so flaxen that she was the family pride. Whole generations of Dutch burghers were expressed in her blue eyes and wide, knobby forehead. Even her mother felt she had almost atoned for not having had a boy when she saw Katrinka's intense Van Kuyperishness, if I may so express it, and the entire family wondered at the obtuseness of the male race in general in remaining blind to the charms of this fifth Van Kuyper.

All the girls, except perhaps Lysbet, had inherited some of the dainty prettiness of their mother, to whom it was a heritage from her mother, who had been a very beautiful nobody, dating only from Colonial days, and whose exquisite portrait, hanging in an obscure corner of the great dining-room, was usually mistaken for a work of art. It seemed a sad comment on the taste of the average man that this pink-and-white daintiness was more attractive bait, matrimonially, than the shining knobbiness of the true Dutch type.

The old homestead was a great, straggling Dutch farmhouse on one end and a conglomerate architectural puzzle on the other, representing three distinct eras, or, as an irreverent wag put it, three distinct errors.

The original Dutch homestead, modeled exactly after the Petrus Stuyvesant mansion on the "Bouwerie," soon proved too small for the prolific Van Kuypers, and an addition,

small but carrying out the lines of the old house, was added. Then came an unregenerate son who built out a wing decidedly Colonial in character, followed by a grandson who, the present generation was convinced, was mad, and who added a square box at one end topped with a mansard roof.

This same gentleman had gone even farther to send his name down the whispering gallery of ages in obloquy and disgrace. He had Anglicized the dear old family name into plain Kipp, dropping the precious Van, and had relegated the magnificently framed and blazoned coat-of-arms to the garret, replacing it with an engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence. Fortunately for the salvation of the traditions of the Van Kuypers, the son of this degenerate developed a mania for restoration. The vulgar and hideous Kipp became again Van Kuyper, the Declaration of Independence changed places with the coat-of-arms in the garret, and he made a will with a clause providing a trust fund in perpetuity under which every baby born into the family and provided with a Dutch name was to be a beneficiary. So at every birth, family records were scoured and old Dutch histories reviewed in order to give a correct name to the blessed infant.

The old house as it now stood, covered richly with ivy and honeysuckle and at one end with a superb wistaria vine, presented a quaint and picturesque appearance, and was as comfortable within as it was queer without; withal it was so rich in tradition and history that it was almost as interesting as an old manorial English home.

This house, with a snug sum for its maintenance, had been heretofore entailed on the eldest son of each generation. The entail was now broken, and in old Mr. Van Kuyper was vested the power to nominate the heir. This was the bait offered to the daughter who could induce her husband to assume the family name.

Katrinka, then, was twenty-nine, short, stout, blonde and placid, worrying not a whit over her mateless con-

dition. Nevertheless, her sisters tormented her somewhat, their very pointed comments being frequently tipped with venom. Lysbet had grown absolutely personal in her allusions to her own early marriage. Christina had asked her, point blank, how it was she did not seem to "catch on." Christina had grown so vulgar since marrying that Smith! This was probably one of his horrid expressions.

Gertruyd, who had buried a Bilterken in the old family mausoleum on Staten Island, and was soon to espouse a Van der Linden, expressed her views in this wise:

"Well, truly, Katrinka, I don't think you realize how time flies. You are nearly thirty and have let all your best chances slip. You will take up with a crooked stick yet. It is time to *vous ranger*."

Mrs. Bilterken was one of those pretty idiots who can get any number of husbands and bury them only a trifle less cheerfully than they marry them.

Katrinka was quite willing to *ranger* herself, and looked pleasantly conscious at the allusion to her best chances. She had never had any, and Gertruyd knew it, but this was a little way she had of sandwiching the bitter with the sweet, always endeavoring to give a wholesome lesson with a bit of flattery.

As for Janettie, the pretty hoyden at school—she called her sister "dear old Trinky" and "a nice old thing;" introduced her to her boy beaux as her "spinster sister," and reminded her continually that "when I am out you'll have to take a back seat, miss."

These little things were mere pin pricks, of course, but Katrinka was tired of being the family pincushion, and made up her mind that married she would be, and that without delay. While she did not possess a very brilliant mind, it had a certain tenacity of purpose.

She thought of every available man in New Haarlem, and reviewed his various qualifications, but finally

dressed for the great event of the season, the Knickerbocker ball, without having selected a victim.

II

THE Knickerbocker ball was the climax of the social season of New Haarlem. On this great occasion Lysbet's daughter was to make her first appearance in society, and so Janettie's débüt had been advanced a full year that they might make their social curtsey together.

Katrinka could not help feeling a certain disappointment that she was now handicapped in the matrimonial stakes by these romping young fillies. What show would she have, aged and carrying weight, to get under the wire ahead, with those slim, clever youngsters joggling her at every turn and relegating her to the heat and dust of the track while they hugged the rail?

So it was not in a very cheerful mood that she donned her black lace gown, instead of the white she had intended to wear. To the latter Janettie had strenuously objected. "Why, Trinky, you're years too old for white! Do you want to pass for a débütante? You will look an idiot. Besides, with your special shade of complexion—a kind of magenta, you know—black tones you down so."

Now certainly this was unkind of Janettie, but being the baby and the beauty, much was forgiven her, so Katrinka took the matter very meekly, and only cried a little in secret as she put away her white gown and arrayed herself in solemn black.

It was a satisfaction to her to realize that Janettie was right; black was becoming and made the brilliant whiteness of her really fine neck and arms more noticeable. When the thick hair was piled like a gold coronet high on her head and her "magenta" cheeks toned down by some judiciously disposed face powder, she experienced a certain pleasure as she gazed at herself in the mirror, and knew that she was really at her best.

Katrinka entered the ballroom mod-

estly behind her young and pretty sister, but with all the dignity of carriage befitting a Van Kuyper. The patonesses greeted her cordially, Lysbet looked her over approvingly, and her débütante niece, Miss Duvertie Van Hoesen, condescended to say "How very nice you look, Aunt Trinky!" This was all most gratifying, and Katrinka's pleasure deepened the color suffusing her cheeks and brow.

It was an unheard of thing in New Haarlem for any of the patriarchal family to lack partners. Not only the "deference due" assured them of proper attention, but also their many and liberal entertainments, to which no one would run the risk of forfeiting an invitation.

New Haarlem was very severe in its code of social ethics, and none dared trifle with it. It was one of those flourishing towns just too far from any great centre of commerce to attract the suburban dweller, and yet not so placed with regard to altitude or proximity to salt water as to attract the Summer tourist. It was beautifully situated in a fertile, rolling country, and was parted in the middle by a winding stream, which supplied power for its great mills and was an unending source of pleasure to its young people. The New Haarlemites were a proud and exclusive community. Newcomers, unless bearing the passport of friendship with one of the old families, were never encouraged to pitch their tents permanently among them.

The wealth of the Indies was no passport, nor was the poverty of Job a bar, providing always that one bore the genuine old Dutch hall-mark.

It was, therefore, with intense surprise that Katrinka, who after her third waltz was fanning vigorously and hoping her arms were not getting mottled, saw Lysbet approaching her with a young man not only a stranger, but, if looks proclaimed nationality, an Irishman. How very odd! What extraordinary combination of circumstances could induce Lysbet to smile and smirk so agreeably on this raw-boned, lank young man? She had

little time for speculation, for Lysbet was saying:

"Katrinka, I wish to present Mr. McGillicuddy, an old friend of Diedrich's."

Mr. McGillicuddy couldn't have been a very old friend of anybody's, for the thin line of down on his lip and his very frank young face proclaimed him not a day over twenty-three.

Mr. McGillicuddy was tall and very, very thin. His neck was long and showed two hollows in the back, between which the muscles bulged. He had been born, probably, before the appliance for holding back children's ears was invented, for his stood out each side of his head like the handles of a loving-cup, and were very pink at the tips, as if blushing at their undue prominence. His hair was sandy, his countenance of the simian Irish cast. His eyes, however, were very blue and clear, while round the corners of his mouth were humorous wrinkles and a lurking smile threatening to break out at the slightest provocation into a whole-souled and merry laugh.

Mrs. Van Hoesen went on, with a certain condescension in her tone: "Mr. McGillicuddy, Katrinka, has come to New Haarlem as assistant editor of the *Gazette*. Being a classmate of Diedrich's, I hope we can make his stay a pleasant one."

Katrinka smiled and assured the blushing youth she would do her best to this end. Her kind words and honest smile went right to the young man's heart. He had been having a very dreary time with all the stiff old Knickerbockers, and but for accidentally meeting Diedrich Van Hoesen would have hied him away on the first express from New Haarlem; but Diedrich, a very jolly, good-hearted boy, had insisted on his coming to this ball, and having got him there, had promptly forgot all about him till his mother called his attention to the lonely youth poking in a corner, looking wretchedly uncomfortable.

"By St. Nick—" the Vans all swore

by St. Nick—"I never gave him a thought! Take him to Aunt Trinky, mother, she's good-natured—" and mother had obeyed.

"Are you a classmate of Diedrich's, Mr. McGillicuddy? You look older." Score two for Katrinka. Really, this stout girl with the white shoulders was more angel than woman then.

"Oh, yes, some years. I was not a classmate, but we roomed in the same house and so grew somewhat chummy. It was like meeting a long-lost brother when I saw him on the street yesterday. I felt such a stranger in a strange land."

"We will cure you of that if you stay here long enough."

"You are the first person except Diedrich who has made me want to stay. New Haarlem is not very cordial to newcomers."

"No, I suppose not; we rather pride ourselves on our pride, you know. After to-night, however, you will see a change. Once admitted to the sacred precincts of the Knickerbocker your future is assured."

"Then, indeed, I am more indebted to Diedrich than I imagined. My social career here is eminently important to me."

"Then take my word for it that it is assured. If you have any lingering doubts ask me to dance, and if I accept you are a made man."

Mr. McGillicuddy laughed and gave the invitation in due form. Katrinka smilingly accepted, and as their eyes met she caught a look of genuine admiration in his blue orbs which thrilled her with its potentiality. He danced wonderfully well; he talked even better, with true Irish flashes of almost unconscious wit, and he paid Katrinka the homage of unremitting attention, so that when our mature and heretofore hopeless heroine was sinking into the lethe of virginal slumber, the last image on her mental retina was that of a red-headed young man, and her last conscious thought "Why not!" Why not, indeed?

Mr. Mike McGillicuddy asked himself practically the same question. Here was a girl with a line of an-

cestors as long as the Atlantic, with a comfortable fortune in prospect, and though certainly neither young nor pretty, deliciously plump. He adored plumpness, he was so execrably lean himself, and considering her family connections, especially her plutocratic and politically powerful brother-in-law Smith, there was no doubt he might do worse. Mike would not have been a true Irishman had not a political bee buzzed in his caroty crop.

Michael worshipped lineage. His own, of course, he could trace right back to Brian Boru, but the estates were—well, mythical. Mike had a keen suspicion that his own kingly father had made the transatlantic trip between decks. He remembered a certain piece of *lignum vitae* at home to which his father would point proudly as the staff that helped him on to fortune. It bore a strong family resemblance to a policeman's night club.

When Alderman McGillicuddy died he had the greatest funeral the Eleventh ward had ever seen—a gorgeous pageantry of woe, that sent delicious chills and tremors through the spine and marrow of every Irishman in the “deestrict.” The hearse was drawn by four horses covered with black velvet palls embroidered in silver. The hearse itself bore eight great plumes, like a drum major's hat. The X. Y. Z. Society marched in a body all the way to Calvary, with green and gold sashes on their shoulders, and freshly ironed hats, preceded by the Irish flag and the Stars and Stripes, tied up with crêpe, the while muffled drums beat time to mournful Irish dirges. As for carriages, they had never been counted, but the widow was assured that when the stately hearse passed under the gateway at Calvary the last carriage was just leaving Brooklyn Bridge.

It was shortly after this proudly triumphant funeral march that Michael found himself thrown on his own resources. His father had made and spent money liberally. His shrewd old eye had detected promise in the

boy, and, as he said, he had “given Moike, be Jasus, the eddication of a gentleman,” but the estate when settled up yielded only a small sum of ready money to each of the ten children and a modest competence to the widow.

Patrick, the eldest son, had no social ambitions, but was well equipped to put money in his purse, by fair means or foul. His father's business presented unusual opportunities for either method, so he bought it in, “iligant mirrors and hardwood fixtures,” cut glass and the most extended patronage in the ward, and soon showed the outward visible signs of prosperity in the best-fitting clothes and whitest diamonds he could buy.

Michael, who simply loathed the business and all pertaining thereto, carefully banked his few hundred and started out to conquer fame and fortune. Fame was not hunting him out very eagerly as yet, but Fortune, disguised as a stout young woman with ancestors and the prospect of a bank account, was smiling on him.

III

SPRING waxed into Summer with its usual precipitancy. Summer merged with dignified splendor into Autumn, and Michael and Katrinka saw each other daily. Some days it was only a nod and a smile, but more often there were long, quiet strolls through the fragrant woods, or delicious sails on the twisting river, or pensive evenings on the wide veranda. The old people had grown accustomed to the awkward boy about the house, and hardly gave him a thought, but Lysbet, Christina, Anneke and Gertruyd had put their heads together and talked the matter over.

“Diedrich says—” Diedrich's word was law to his mother—“that he's a very clever fellow and bound to make his mark.”

“Like Bill Stumps, his mark,” laughed Christina.

“Now, don't be frivolous, Chrissy; it's a very serious matter.”

"So it is," said Christina—"for Katrinka. I don't see what business it is of yours." She still resented the interference in her own case.

"Only that it is certainly our business to see that Katrinka does not take a step she will regret. A sister's happiness is a very precious thing."

"Oh, very!" said Christina, mockingly. "My happiness was at stake when I insisted on marrying Jim Smith, and you all made such a row because he did not own a graveyard full of ripened ancestors."

"You are hopelessly vulgar, Christina," said Gertruyd, relict of Bilterken and prospective bride of Van der Linden. "I think it is very much our business. We—"this with a large capital W—"We who have done the family credit by *our* alliances have a perfect right to object to unknown and undesirable brothers-in-law. I'd like to know who Mr. McGillicuddy is, anyhow! Who was his father? What is his mother? Because Diedrich picks him up at college, where any scavenger's son may go who has the price, must we take him into the bosom of the family?" Gertruyd was getting excited.

Christina laughed. "If by the bosom of the family you mean Katrinka's, poor thing! she can't help his ancestry."

Mrs. Bilterken's vinaigrette became necessary. "You are simply atrocious, Christina!"

Anneke took up the cudgels. "Gertruyd is perfectly right. He's objectionable in every way. He's as ugly as an ape, and he hasn't any money; he hasn't any relations, and worst of all, he's Irish."

"Suppose he is ugly? Katrinka's no beauty, the Lord knows. As for not having any relations, that is the greatest blessing on earth. I wish to goodness Jim hadn't any."

Lysbet coincided with Christina. "I think Christina is quite right," she said, in her matronly way. "We can't expect Katrinka to marry as well as we have done. We have all, in fact, even Gertruyd and I, taken a step or two down socially, for we are

quite the oldest family in America. We shouldn't be too critical and exclusive."

"Oh, bother the family!" said Christina, the iconoclast. "What good do a lot of dead ancestors do anyone? I can't, for the life of me, see that it adds one cubit to one's stature, physically, mentally or morally; or that we are a bit cleverer, better or whiter than our neighbors because some remote grandfather with a statistical mind decided to keep the family records. I am glad that my young ones are Smiths and that there is no proof they ever had a paternal grandfather. Let Katrinka marry her Irishman if she wants to, and bring a lot of little Paddys into the world. That's her lookout, not ours. I should think you had all got a lesson to last you a lifetime when I married Jim in spite of you, and you see that now I have the best husband in the bunch and more money than any of you."

Lysbet's quiet voice interposed. "But the name! What about the name?"

"Oh, it is an awful name," groaned Gertruyd.

"Oh, I don't mean that—but can we persuade him to take Van Kuyper?"

A grim silence fell on the company.

"I suppose," said Lysbet, "this will be a very critical question to put to him."

"I think," said Christina, "we'd better wait until he asks her before we have a family row. There is no engagement yet, only philandering, and it may never amount to a row of pins."

"No," assented the colorless Anneke; "that is so. It's too bad he's years younger than Katrinka. If anyone is entitled to make a fuss, it seems to me it's his family, not ours."

"I don't believe he has any," said Gertruyd.

"Nor any ancestors, either. He has just growed, like Topsy, but he has growed considerable, and if Katrinka wants him, let her have him."

say I, even if he is as poor as a church mouse."

"Well, I do hope he'll do things properly," said Gertruyd, and then, with a solemn look of mutual understanding, she and Anneke took their leave.

IV

THE engagement was announced. Katrinka the plump and Michael the lean were formally affianced. All New Haarlem was agog. At last the old maid Van Kuyper was engaged. It was always a subject for general rejoicing when there was prospect of a marriage in the Van Kuyper family, for the old people gave their daughters imposing weddings.

The trousseau was the talk of months, and the linen and housefurnishings all came from the inexhaustible chests in the garret.

Mr. Van Kuyper, now nearly eighty, was contented with Katrinka's choice, but the sisters, even Christina, while delighted that Katrinka had secured a husband, were determined that the glory of family must be upheld, and that before the nuptial day two very important questions must be decided —would Michael assume the Van Kuyper name, and would the engagement ring be of befitting splendor?

No matter what might occur in stormy family meetings, however, to the world at large only satisfaction must be expressed, and in view of the important interests at stake, even Christina abated a trifle her attitude of lofty independence.

"I hope to goodness he knows enough to buy a decent ring," she said, surveying, with much complacence, the huge and brilliant gems on her own fat fingers.

This same thought was agitating them all, even to the exclusion of the more important question of name, though none expressed it quite so plainly. Even Katrinka was getting worried, for though the fateful question had been put and replied to some

weeks since, not a word as to a suitable *gage d'amour* had been breathed.

It was a cold and rainy afternoon, and the lovers had been together in the great library for some time, Katrinka thinking of her sisters' persistent questioning, and Michael oblivious of everything but a deep sense of personal comfort and his ladylove's soothing presence. Katrinka was in no sense exciting, and as she seldom volunteered a remark or ignited a new train of thought, it certainly startled Michael when she broke a long silence with:

"Oh, Michael, dear—" and then stopped short.

Here a sudden flare of the smouldering logs struck a flash of light from a very big and ugly seal ring that Michael was wearing, and at the same time projected a bright idea into her inner consciousness.

"Michael, dear, may I wear your ring? It is funny to be engaged and have no visible pledge."

"Why, my dear girl, it's miles too big! Do you want an engagement ring? I have always thought such things mere form, but you shall have one in a day or two, my dear girl."

"Of course I want one, you silly-billy! Not for the value of it—I've lots of rings now—but my sisters all have them, and it will always be the dearest thing in the world to me." This was true, for poor Katrinka was really in love with her ugly duckling, whose affection for her was not guiltless of a keen knowledge of the tidy little fortune she would one day inherit and the very substantial allowance old Van Kuyper had given to his girls on their wedding days—to all, that is, save Christina, whose plebeian spouse had declared he didn't "care a damn."

"What is your favorite gem, my darling?"

"Oh, anything you prefer."

"A diamond?"

"Entrancing, yes!—‘a gem of the purest ray serene.’" When Katrinka took to quotation it was a symptom that her imagination was running riot.

She was exhilarated at having

brought Michael to the scratch, though she would not have expressed it in this way. Michael went home and spent a most rueful *quart d'heure* over his bank account, then, drawing a cheque for half the amount of his balance, sent an order to a firm of New York jewelers to send by express, "insured," six solitaire diamond rings of various sizes and values, his limit in price being expressed by enclosed cheque. Three or four days passed, and then the rings arrived and were sent to his fiancée, with a note begging her to choose and return the rejected ones.

Katrinka opened the box tremblingly, and within discovered six smaller boxes, each containing a ring. One by one she put them on; one by one she examined them; each ring bore a cabalistic numbered tag, of which Michael held the key, so price could not guide her. Then she put them all on at once, and then she put them all back in their little satin boxes, and concluded it was too grave a matter to trust to her own inexperienced judgment, and that she would call a family council to help her out. To this end Mrs. Van Kuyper was consulted.

"Mother, are you alone?"

"Yes, dear. What is it?"

Katrinka came in, solemnly closed the door and turned the key. Her mother looked rather alarmed at these proceedings.

"Don't be frightened; I only want your advice. See! Michael has sent me six rings to choose from, and they are all so lovely I can't make up my mind which one to keep."

For a long time the rings were examined and discussed, but no conclusion was reached. Sometimes the largest and sometimes the whitest caught her eye. Even the smallest elicited favorable comment, and at last her mother said:

"Suppose we ask the girls to judge?" Her daughters were still "the girls," to the old lady, and on their judgment she implicitly relied. Katrinka at once agreed to the suggestion, with the thought that in the

future no impudent comment could be made if each of the sisters had a voice in the choice.

Even Janettie should have her say, so four little notes were despatched to the four married sisters to "come to mother's this evening at eight to decide an important question," and Janettie was verbally requested to be present at the council.

Katrinka felt that a critical moment was at hand. She took the precious box and its contents to her own room and locked it carefully in the chimney cupboard. This done, she sat down with true Dutch patience to sew on her wedding garments, weaving into each stitch loving thoughts of her dear Michael, who had come so generously and nobly to the front.

Evening finally arrived, and with it the sisters. Lysbet drove over from the Van Hoesen farm with Gertruyd, who was visiting her. Christina arrived noisily with a great rattle of silver-plated pole chains and a most effective short stop that nearly brought her fine blue-ribbon high steppers down on their haunches. Shortly after eight, Anneke, who lived round the corner, "ran in" in her tea gown, and Janettie, in great excitement, opened the door herself and ushered them all, with much *empressement*, into the state drawing-room.

Mrs. Van Kuyper had made elaborate preparations for the council. Michael had been invited to spend the evening in the library with "father," and Wyntie, the Dutch housemaid, had been instructed to serve the schnapps and hot water kettle at nine o'clock. Every burner in the great crystal chandelier had been lighted and turned down, only a dim, religious light being left to permit the row of dead and gone Van Kuypers in their gilt frames to gaze solemnly and approvingly on their descendants.

Here also the living Van Kuypers beamed from huge canvases, each having been painted on reaching her twenty-first birthday. Lysbet was posed as Terborch's "Flute Player," Christina was obviously struggling to

hold up a huge 'cello, after Netscher's "Music Lesson," while Gertruyd, the lovely, simpered a long way after Saskia Van Ulenburch. Katrinka was really the image of Rembrandt's portrait of his first wife, Isabella Brandt, famed for her Dutch plainness of feature. Anneke was posed as a Dutch peasant in the picturesque costume made familiar by the portraits of Queen Wilhelmina, and Janettie, still in her teens, was absent.

The family assembled, no time was lost in useless chattering. Lysbet, as eldest, was spokeswoman.

"I am begged by Katrinka to say that she has asked us here in order to benefit by our advice in selecting her engagement ring. Janettie, you are the tallest, turn up the lights." The big crystal knob was turned, and instantly all five rows of burners flashed into flame that was reflected by hundreds of prisms in a glory of light that would have done credit to the dome of an opera house. The precious box was placed on a table under the chandelier, and Katrinka opened it, while the sisters crowded around, all expressing their opinions at the same time, so that only a confused jumble of words ensued.

"I think," said Lysbet, "we had better examine them separately." So the others sat down while Lysbet began her inspection. It was a tedious process, as Lysbet was critical, conscientious and slow, but she finally announced that her decision was made, and sat down.

Christina bustled up next. One by one she compared them with the rings on her own hands; before these headlights they were as the spark of a firefly under an arc light. Then she licked each one deliberately with her tongue, and finally, with an audible sniff, made room for Gertruyd.

Gertruyd insisted on having all the lights lowered, and then Lysbet and Christina, who hadn't thought of the darkness, must have another look; then all three whispered comments, looked unutterable things, and sat down solemnly.

Anneke had various different colored bits of ribbon to draw through the rings, one by one, and tried the effect of each. Janettie frankly admitted she knew very little about diamonds, but after scratching each one on the window pane to make sure they were genuine, announced:

"I think they are all just dears!"

Then there was a whispered consultation between Lysbet and Christina, and the latter said something to Gertruyd, which Gertruyd passed on to Anneke, who nodded a vigorous assent, and then Lysbet spoke:

"Katrinka, there is not a ring in the lot that one of us would wear. I hardly think Mr. McGillicuddy appreciates the honor you are doing him."

"Is appreciation measured by the number of karats in a diamond?" said Katrinka, hotly.

"These are all miserable little things," said Christina—"mere apologies. I am surprised at your giving them the slightest consideration."

"They are not as big as yours, but Michael is not a millionaire, like James."

"That is true," said Gertruyd, "but when a man marries a Van Kuyper he must expect to strain a point. One of these might have done for an O'Brien or a Donahue, but not for *one of us*. If he really can't afford a better one we might help him out! Anything for the credit of the family!" Gertruyd had such a clever way of implanting nasty little stings.

A general whisper of approval met this kind speech, no one noticing that Katrinka's eyes were getting wet.

"The honor of the family will be upheld, never fear. Michael only wishes to please me. He is all goodness and devotion. I shall ask him to come in."

Mr. McGillicuddy had spent a delightful evening. Age had not robbed Mr. Van Kuyper of his skill in mixing schnapps, and Michael came in flushed and happy at his fiancée's summons.

"Michael, we have examined the rings thoroughly, and think your jeweler has treated you abominably.

The largest stone is yellow and the purest miserably set, and one has a flaw visible even to us!" Thus Katrinka, gently breaking the news.

Christina, whose inbred bluntness had known no softening after years of plebeian association, said:

"Besides, they are all too small; mere chips. Just see the difference between them and the smallest of mine!" and she held them up for inspection.

Michael was feeling very mellow and generous, and so taking the box from Katrinka, he said, heartily:

"You shall have a diamond ring as big as a hen's egg if you want it. There! These go back to-night."

Even Gertruyd and Christina had to admit that he behaved handsomely, and Katrinka's delight was something wonderful to behold, wherefore what might have proved a most unpleasant ordeal turned out delightfully. Mysterious the ways of fate! The most powerful agents to this agreeable climax were a certain brown bottle and a very old, old gentleman's crafty manipulation thereof.

But for poor Michael there was a to-morrow, and though there is a popular notion that to-morrow never arrives, we have all been convinced of its fallacy by headaches or other woes. Michael fell asleep joyfully, with a tender farewell repeating itself in his mind and an altogether roseate view of the future filling his happily beclouded brain, but in the morning, as the immortal poet has it, "Oh, what a difference!"

His headache was by no means lessened by a rueful inspection of his bank account, followed by an inspection of his wardrobe. Michael had never been a vain man, and had so far been content to be clothed; now a necessity to be dressed arose. Two suits, both well worn, and his dress suit—fortunately new—were all he possessed. His credit at his tailor's, however, would provide for the outer man. But where should he raise the cash for the findings? A man could hardly be married with just a change

of shirts. It was a horrible problem, but Michael, with true Irish grit, faced it boldly.

"Here goes!" he said, with desperation, and drew a cheque for his last dollar, while he surveyed ruefully the collection of "mere chips" on his table, so scorned of the Van Kuyper clan. Michael began to have a suspicion that he was a fool. He was about to marry a woman older than himself, noticeably plain, and no prospect of inheriting a penny for years—for what? A will-o'-the-wisp called social position; in other words, to be snubbed and despised by people who hated his race and his humble beginnings, when he might have been a sought-after and respected personage in his father's ward. The son of the whilom policeman, saloon-keeper and Alderman shook his fist at his sorry reflection in the mirror, and said: "Mike, me boy, you've been a damn fool!" Fool or no, he was in for it now, so despatched the cheque, with the following brief and characteristic note:

MESSRS. GLITTER, GOLD & Co.

Dear Sirs—Box of rings returned today; most unsatisfactory. I enclose cheque for \$300 more, which add to previous amount, and send me at once one damn big diamond, and set in the latest mode—white, flawless and bright as h—!

Yours truly,

MICHAEL MCGILLICUDDY.

What the eminent firm thought of the queer note deponent sayeth not, but within a few days Katrinka's finger was adorned with a gem at which not even Christina could cavil.

Of course, it went through the same course of treatment. The great chandelier felt itself overworked by two such illuminations in one week, the family reassembled, the gas was turned down, candles were brought, all known tests were applied, and Michael and Father Van Kuyper, again mellowed by hot schnapps, were informed that the ring had passed inspection and was proudly accepted by Katrinka.

Michael, humbled by this ordeal

and by the fact that his bank account was *nil* and his prospects slim, fell an easy victim to the change of name. Old Mr. Van Kuyper, in his delight that at last the vexed questions of the name and homestead were settled, celebrated by so many glasses of schnapps that he was most grievously ill, and came near breaking up everything by inopportune shuffling off his mortal coil.

The day before the wedding Diedrich Van Hoesen rushed into Michael's room with his usual impetuosity, and found that gentleman just strapping up his suit case.

"For heaven's sake, man, why don't you put all your things in your trunk?"

Michael, now Mr. Michaelis Van

Kuyper, by act of Legislature, replied, in some excitement:

"Me trunk, is it? This is me trunk!"

"Do you mean to say—?"

"I do mean to say that this is me trunk, and it contains me intire wardrobe and trousseau. Two pairs of socks—silk, be the grace of God—wan pajamas, ditto, and wan change of underwear. It took every penny I had in the world to buy that damned ring, and I am thinkin' me widdin' tower will be a carriage ride round the corner and back. It's a great thing to git married; it's a greater yet to marry a Van Kuyper, and the greatest of all to *be* a Van Kuyper! McGillicuddy I was born, Van Kuyper I die—the first case on record of an Irish Dutchman!"



THE FEMININE WAY

HOW is it, when a mother's life
Is passed in strenuous, irksome strife,
Corralling *partis* for her dears,
That she dissolves in bitter tears
When at the altar rail they stand,
And wipes her eyes with trembling hand?

Because next day you'll read—'tis inevitably expected—
An account of the old dame's dress, and how she was affected!



CONSTITUTIONALLY RELUCTANT

PARKER—I don't believe tramps have any conscience.
TUCKER—Yes, they have; but it won't work.



IMPRISONED LOVE

LOVE was unwilling with me to dwell;
So I barred him in, in a sumptuous cell.
This my mistake—poor Love sits sighing
And refuses his food; I fear he's dying.

E. D. P.

THE ROAD TO HELL

By Theodosia Garrison

NOW I had thought the road to Hell
A dread and dreary place,
With spirits fell to grin and yell
In each man's tortured face,
Who fain would slip from spur and whip
To weep a little space.

*Nay, he who told thee of this thing
Full loudly hath he lied;
The road is bright and rose bedight,
The way is fair and wide,
And Wit and Grace with smiling face
Walk with thee side by side.*

But I had thought the road to Hell
A crowded path and steep,
Where one must go in gloom and woe,
Nor pause to rest or sleep,
And though he sink have naught to drink
But tears his hot eyes weep.

*He lied who told thee of this thing!
The road is free as air,
And soft to tread as roses spread
When forth the bride would fare;
And sweet and fine the bread and wine
White hands shall serve thee there.*

But I had thought the road to Hell
To be a lonesome way,
Where all alone, as some dull drone,
One languished night and day.
Though others wore the path before,
They could not speak or stay.

*He lied who told thee of this thing!
On that fair road and free,
With laugh and song shall dance along
A goodly company;
And all above thy red-lipped Love
Walk hand in hand with thee.*

But I had thought the road to Hell
 Would echo with men's sighs,
 That through the night would burn the light
 Of women's tortured eyes,
 And rock and plain breathe back the pain
 And anguish of old cries.

He lied who told thee of this thing!
On that gay road and bright
The sound of flutes and silver lutes
Shall lure thee and delight,
And suns by day shall pass away
For love-white moons by night.

Though I fear not the road to Hell,
 Wherein 'tis joy to wend,
 How shall it be with one when he
 Hath reached the journey's end,
 And out leaps Fear with shriek and leer
 His shrinking soul to rend?

Nay, he who walks upon that road
No fear may strike or fell;
The clasp and kiss he would not miss
Have bound him as a spell,
And they alone nor cry nor moan
Who walk the road to Hell.



ALAS FOR ASPIRATIONS!

OLD GENTLEMAN—So you think my daughter loves you, sir, and you wish to marry her?

DUDELEIGH—That's what I called to see you about. Is there any insanity in your family?

“No, sir; and there's not going to be any.”



OVERWHELMING CORDIALITY

“DO your country cousins treat you cordially when you visit them in the Summer?”

“Do they! Say, the minute I get there they make me take some elderberry cordial as a fatigue destroyer, then I have to drink some peppermint cordial for fear the water won't agree with me; next day they insist that I absorb some snakeroot cordial, to ward off possible chills and fever, and then I have to gulp down some liverwort cordial for the good of my system generally. Do they treat me cordially? By Jove, there's plenty of cordiality! I can taste it for months after!”

ALEX. RICKETTS.

THE WANDERING AMERICAN

By Mrs. Sherwood

THE criticisms on our new civilization, or lack of it, from the first Englishman with a grievance down to Kipling and Sir Lepel Griffin, including those dear friends, Mrs. Trollope and Dickens, besides acquainting us with some very valuable truths, have done us one incalculable harm; they have polished us down, as the lapidary brook polishes the hitherto well-shaped and eccentric pebbles into indistinguishable ovals—a great pity!

Now the Wandering American is no longer distinguishable from anybody else, except by the smartness of his women. The group around *pater-familias Americanus* is always clean and well dressed for traveling—and that means properly dressed, what the French called "*bien mis*." The American women are very handsome and original, as a rule, but alas! those godly critics have rubbed them down. In this the Trollopes have been assisted by Henry James, whose best book was "Daisy Miller," an encyclical to his countrywomen. He has taught the American girl more how she looks to European eyes than has even Howells's "Lady of the Aroostook" and "Ragged Lady;" Howells has done much to corrupt their etiquette and encourage them in their mistakes, however.

Nothing remains to the Wandering American now but his speech; and Indiana and Illinois can be *heard*, if they are not *seen*. James Whitcomb Riley, master of dialect, has written a paper on the singular speech of his country, Indiana. He attributes it to the rifts of population which drifted in from Illinois and from Virginia, from New England, and from the

flatboat country, up and down the great rivers, all invalidated by a singularly dangerous catarrhal climate and by the ague, which has ever weakened the throat. President Harrison, most classic of orators, who himself spoke correctly, was very much alive to this peculiarity of his fellow "Gentlemen from Indiana," and now, as Booth Tarkington, one of the most successful of young novelists, lives there, we may expect another and more comprehensive essay on the subject.

Mr. Howells, in "Ragged Lady," has made a rather tiresome but very successful effort to spell out the rustic, second-class, New England lingo, the "shiftless pronunciation," as they would call it in Salem, the draggy drawl, the indifference to the letter *r*, the snubbing of the third syllable, the obliteration of the *l*, and the prefix of "Well!" to every remark. Doubtless in rural New York there is a *David Harum* class who murder their English as their forefathers exterminated the Indians. When he carries this conglomerate to Europe the Wandering American can be "spotted."

But in the matter of his hat he is monstrously like other people. Old Governor Robert Morris, of New Jersey, wore as a headdress for many years the skin of a loon with the feathers outside, but nowadays one fears that the brains of the loon may have gone inside the head. There is now only a very correct derby on the *outside*—a loss to the picturesque, so far as the Wandering American is described on steamships and in railway carriages. Even the beloved and graceful Vandyck soft felt of our most picturesque countryman, "Buffalo Bill,"

is not copied as it ought to be. It is the only thing I cannot forgive in Edward VII., that he did not make that beautiful hat the fashion. There was a moment when the *arbiter elegantiarum* drove down Piccadilly in an Alpine hat with an eagle's feather standing up on one side. It sold the soft, pretty, comfortable hat to a few copyists. But alas! the stovepipe held its own, and will always continue to disguise mankind.

Mrs. Trollope, whose lively book I have just re-read, was a good writer, but withal the most prejudiced and jaundiced author that ever attempted to describe a new country. However, she was a splendid reformer. She held the mirror up to nature in that distant and formative period when the smug New Englander did not venture as far as Cincinnati if he could stay at home in his comfortable New England. She caused cars and steam-boats to be made more sanitary and comfortable. When we were wandering beasts she told us so. Yet she was not a particularly refined woman, nor were her sons after her. She had a grievance, and that inspires a writer, but she really was very just toward our great American faults of conceit and sensitiveness.

She hated to have the maid she hired say, "I am a lady, and I expect to be treated so," but if Mrs. Trollope came back to-day and went to the fashionable watering place of Bar Harbor she could find a free-born American citizen chambermaid who would say the same thing and refuse to bring her a pillow extra. That infelicity of republics still exists in many places not far from the City Hall in New York.

The traveling American is, however, warned both by experience and books that he is watched with curious interest by all the Amalekites of fee collectors for those stray coins that he still scatters with more generosity than prudence over the arid plains of travel. In speech and in money-spending the American can still be discernible, and by reason of the dangerous beauty of his daughters he is

apt to be followed and bothered. "Hif I ketch any English lourd follerin' my daughters, I'll whack him," remarked a very delicate-looking Indiana lady, in my hearing, one day at Nice. She pronounced the word lord as we do the name of that miracle-producing place near Pau, written Lourdes, and although this still very pretty, young-looking mother of two exquisitely beautiful creatures looked evanescent, she attacked and floored the English language as Mrs. Cleaver Hammer does the barrooms. There is a mighty power in the way certain Americans pronounce what they call the English language. Is it an effort to overcome the organic weakness of the throat, the catarrhal difficulty? The followers of Oliver Cromwell, born in the fens of Lincolnshire, all had colds in the head continuously. Hence the "nasal, psalm-singing Puritan" and the early Yankee pronunciation, now almost obliterated.

Mrs. Trollope served as a model to Dickens, who really copied very much from her. He did not take the trouble to see all the Eden he describes. *Jefferson Brick* he did see, and *Elijah Pogram*, and using the very same language which Kipling uses in beginning his description of San Francisco, that he was "angry at the violation of copyrights," he proceeds to write the most amusing book of misinformation that the traveler can buy. And at the same time these books are full of truths—they have helped to make the great West what it is, a land of luxury and refinement, worthy of its immense gifts of nature, worthy of its splendid prosperity. Its Ghengis Khan, its Aladdin, its magicians, its millionaires, its beautiful women, can well afford to have been abused and to be now patronized by *Punch*, for the good these jaundiced English writers did them in pointing out their faults.

Sir Lepel Griffin wrote from such a spleenful attack that we can hardly touch his book except to throw it over the hedge. One is reminded of that careful Scot who would not speak the name of the Father of Lies; "but,"

said he, "I have a friend who is personally acquainted with him, and he says he is a very agreeable gentleman." I do not doubt that he is. From Marie Corelli's "Sorrows of Satan" I have formed a very favorable opinion of his manners, poor old Satan!

Sir Lepel abuses his friend and fellow-countryman, Matthew Arnold, quite as much as he would if he were an American. As the much abused would-be lover of a pretty American once said to her, "You could not treat me worse if I were your husband," so Sir Lepel belabors every American idea, plan, city, person and institution. His book is cleverly written, strong, and good for one in the Spring, like boneset tea. But it has been like many of the waves of the lapidary brook, too efficacious; we are getting rubbed too smooth. We have a wealth of temperament; we have strength and power to spare; we would better keep some of our eccentricities. We are the richest people in the world as well. Poor Mr. Carnegie! Has he found a place to hide in—some endless contiguity of space?

Here, again, is an example of the wealth of man represented in the faculty of one individual. Every American thinks he can be as rich as Mr. Carnegie and give away thirty millions a year to earn the bliss of dying poor. However, that latter clause comes too easy to some of us.

Emerson describes the Englishman as a king in a plain coat. Since he wrote that, *Punch* has given Uncle Sam a new suit of evening clothes and makes him dance with a princess. But the hands and feet of the chimpanzee still stick out. *Ex pede Herculem!*

Whether the Wandering American travels for society, for access to means of science and study, or for mere pleasure, if he goes armed with an education, the certainty of good blood in his veins and wealth, he knows that he needs no flourish of trumpets. Perhaps Mrs. Trollope has made it plain to him that boasting is an American defect, and now he is no longer

"spread-eagle." She says, in one place: "To me the dreary coldness and want of enthusiasm in Americans is one of their *greatest defects!* I therefore hailed the demonstrations of popular feeling on their Fourth of July with *real pleasure*. On that day the hearts of the people seemed to awaken from a three hundred and sixty-four days' sleep. They appeared high-spirited, gay, animated, social, generous, or at least, *liberal in expense*; and could they but refrain from spitting on that hallowed day—that is to say, on the Fourth of July—they would at least *appear* to be an amiable people." Kind Mrs. Trollope! Surely one word of approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed!

Perhaps it may be asked, "Why do you waste so much time on a foolish, rather vulgar old woman of the English middle class who visited Cincinnati in 1830, before any of us were born?"

Simply because she was the type and model of every writer whom England has sent over here since, inspired by the same prejudices and dislikes, telling the same fibs. Mrs. Trollope has been the great "Apostle to the Genteels," making us more "genteel"—heaven forgive me for the word!—and she has also invited us to a coming danger, the rubbing-down process, the making of us over into the same commonplace rotund pebbles, just like everybody else.

She says one thing about the women which Time has so unsaid for her that I must quote it: "It is true the women have but little to do with the pageantry, the splendor or the gaiety of the day (the Fourth of July) but setting this defect aside, it was a glorious sight to see a jubilee so *heart-felt as this.*" I think women do generally go out of town on the Fourth of July, but on other occasions they have everything to do with the pageantry, the splendor, the gaiety and the money-spending of America. One of Mrs. Trollope's most sapient remarks was to the effect that "there are reasons why a very general diffusion of literature is im-

possible in America." So Kipling says also: "They are all too actively employed to read anything—except the newspapers!"

We must remember that Washington Irving and Cooper, Bryant and Bancroft, Channing and Emerson were writing most popular and not yet forgotten books when this first critic, with Captain Basil Hall, was trying to run us down. We can forgive them now, because the fact remains that they did tell us of the evident faults in our manners; they did correct our bumpitiousness, and they have perhaps improved our speech, although as a national defect that can still be improved.

"By jiggers!" said a young Oxonian in the train with me one Summer in Savoy, "I'll be jiggered if that pretty girl ain't an American!"

"How do you know?" asked his friend; and we were all anxious that this pride of the English university should not be "jiggered."

"I know it by her voice and that awful accent," he said; "such a beastly accent!"

Most English critics declare that we Americans talk of our "divine political institutions." I never happened yet to meet an American who did not abuse the opposite party, particularly if it was in power at the time.

It has become the useful fashion for a number of young girls, matronized perhaps by one a little older, to travel over Europe very cheaply, for purposes of study and sight-seeing. It is a most commendable curiosity that sends these young women abroad. They come home vastly enlightened. If they choose to stay as newspaper women or artists, or simply as bachelor maids, no one can say a word about them. The worst that can befall seems to be that they do not find very comfortable quarters in the cities where they must eat and sleep, even when looking at Notre Dame. However, a great city that undertakes to feed people with slender purses has all sorts of caravansaries. They do not suffer as St. Louis and his crusaders suffered at Acre. The world has softened since

1248. Yet the eleven thousand virgins who wander over Europe sometimes complain that they have met the Tartar army and have not driven them back. Terrifying tales of the appearance, numbers and ferocity of female boarding-house keepers—women who neither take nor give quarter—follow the wanderers home. Indeed, the avarice of a certain class has made traveling for these economical girls a very painful experience, although there are few dangers in their pathway, and Cook, that universal soother of travel, can always suggest a way out of the difficulty. Even in Spain, a country proverbially three thousand years behind the rest of Europe, there is a great change for the better now that French railroads and Cook tickets and Swiss landlords are distributed through its picturesque defiles.

The American soldier and sailor, wherever he wanders, is now recognized as a hero. This is the time for him to travel. He can go as Nelson traveled after the battle of the Nile, a creature to be cheered and applauded, honored by kings, worshipped by women, and admired of all people; for the love of courage never dies, and hero worship is inherent in us all.

It is a thousand pities that we have no types. The Irish girl still goes to Ballyshannon Fair in her jaunting-car, the Irish lad swings his shillelagh, the English rough is a perpetual *Bill Sykes*, the Spanish landlord with his handkerchief tied round his head is the same man who cooked the *olla podrida* for *Sancho Panza*. But the Yankee landlord who afforded witticisms for *Sam Slick* is now a Member of Congress, with a careful cutaway, immense standing collar, neat black necktie and one stud in his immaculate shirt. How can you get any fun out of such a fellow? You can get a moderately good dinner out of him, but not such a good one as his father served in his shirt sleeves to your father fifty years ago. When his son goes to Europe it is impossible to tell him from a "lourd"—he has the

same reserve, the quiet manner, the feeling of certainty that he will do the right thing! He is a pebble that has been rubbed too smooth.

As for those types that Mark Twain presented in "The Gilded Age," the cheerful visionary who saw "millions in it" proved to be right. The rainbow-tinted bubbles all had millions in them. And *Colonel Sellers* has been the successful man. He is now to be kneeled unto; he is the great much-begged-of. Not so amusing as when he was selling his eye-water; prosperity has tipped him over into a sad, silent man, almost as melancholy as an English peer, and even if he wears a better hat than Lord Salisbury he looks almost as discontented. Is there something catching in English *ennui*? It is very stylish.

The negro and the Indian are still available for stage purposes, and they do a little service in the novel; but the native American is as extinct as the dodo. As for the American women, they are so adaptable and so imitative that were it not for their very good looks and taste in dress they might be anybody—German *Fraus*, Spanish gypsies, French *demoiselles*. What would Shakespeare have made of the material offered by America? What would *Malvolio* have turned out? The adviser of a President, perhaps. We could give him *Hotspur* in our Vice-President, and plenty of potent, grave and reverend seignors. But have we a *Hamlet* among us? or a *Falstaff*? We have *Coriolanus* and *King Henry the Fifth*, but no *Touchstone*, or *Gravedigger*, or *Launcelot Gobbo*, or *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, or *Romeo*! Alas the day! *Autolycus*, that thief and liar—I am afraid we have him. Old *Adam*, type of faithful service, him we have not. But *Portia*, fair and learned; *Rosalind*, the capricious; *Viola*, image of beauty and spirit; *Isabella*, dignified and saintly—with all these we could accommodate him. This is the season when they are flying over Europe, now going from Paris to Vienna in sixty hours, more or less, stopping, perhaps, at Homburg, where, alack, there is no

Prince to flirt with! The elevation from Prince to King has eclipsed the gaiety of nations. We are all astonished at the difference it has made at Nice and Monte Carlo. And now our lover, *Romeo*, if he is alive, is looking for an American heiress. Neither he nor *Lorenzo* has any time to stop and bother about the moon.

One American peculiarity has not left our American—"he still hurries" too much. "Show me everything you have got here in five minutes," he demands. He still regrets the lack of his American elevator in Europe. But he enjoys a French dinner and the soft air of Italy and its delicate wines. He is fond of fun, and as a national type he is very fond of his wife. Only there are exceptions.

His wife has a "good time." It is the wandering American woman who loves Europe. She knows very well how to appropriate its artistic treasures. She has an eye to the Campanile and Giotto's Tower. She remembers her Lemprière, and knows that Ganymede was a boy. She also has a very clever knack at language; and oh, she buys such gowns, sings so well and dances such a way! No sun on an Easter day is half so fair a sight, and she carries with her much of her American oxygen. What with her vivacity, sparkle, and now her immense height—for we are raising a crop of asparagus girls, who shoot up in a night, splendid *Glundalclitches*, many who top six feet; "divinely tall and most divinely fair" young goddesses, Dianas and Junos, Atalantas flying over the plain—the young American woman is indeed a type to be proud of. The wonder is—and still the wonder grows—how she can be so tall and still be so attractive.

The Wandering American gets all of Europe's best. He is the honey-bee, stealing honey from every opening flower, and no doubt he rejoices that he is no longer slick *Sam Slick*, Uncle Sam, the Yankee, the marked and peculiar being whom Captain Basil Hall, Mrs. Trollope, Dick [redacted] and Kipling have painted him.

The Wandering American s*

first for London—or has done so heretofore—if he leaves New York in April or May. This year there will be no Royalty receiving. The Court functions are of course deferred until the decent period of mourning for the Queen shall have been observed. They have sent the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall off to foreign ports, poor little Royalties! They will not see a Summer for two years.

His Majesty, of course, cannot hold Court, and Her Majesty does not love the slavery, so they say. This will put an end to the chief ambition of the American woman, which is to be presented. But London is still there, the place where the heart of the universe beats loudest, the place best worth seeing in this world. The Wandering American already knows it well, if he has traveled, but the new Wanderer would better learn it in the Summer, when he will not be distracted by the anxieties of social precedence. Rural England is a thing of beauty, and no Summer is missed that is given to England alone.

The Wandering American loves Paris and the Continent. This Summer, after a severe Winter and the severer shock to the people who expected to make eternal fortunes out of the Exposition and did not, will be a good time to see Paris. Prices will not be high and cabdrivers will not be *cochons*.

The month of August at Homburg has heretofore been the dear delight of the Wanderer who expected to meet the Prince of Wales at that gay and cosmopolitan watering place. Alas! there are no more cakes and ale for him. He has, it is said, done much flirting there in his salad days with fair Americans. He is now relegated to the gloomy solitude of a throne.

The quiet German watering places all have their quota of princes and grand dukes, who are admired and courted by the Wandering American. "One goes to Aix-les-Bains to be washed, to Schwalbach to be dried and ironed," say the London physicians.

Perhaps of all the cures Aix-les-Bains is the gayest, the prettiest, the most convenient and the one nearest to Switzerland, being only two hours from Geneva. Parties are thus continually being made up, to vary the tediousness of the baths, to Mont Blanc, to Interlaken, to the lesser baths of Evian, which is a gay little French place. Or going in the other direction, one has all the charms of Savoyard scenery. Here always congregate the English and Italian aristocracy and the French *demi-monde*, the gamblers and the kings. So one has a large party to choose from. The hotels are perfect. For ten francs a day, wine included, the hungry man gets the best dinner in Europe, and the ladies of his party see the best Parisian fashions, a number of kings out of business, and some who are still at the old stand. Very pretty are the hats, and one can buy the best gowns and gloves in all Europe very cheaply there. Grenoble, where gloves are made, is just over the mountain. Such drives! such nightingales! such actors! Coquelin, for instance, cannot be had for the asking anywhere else. The climate is paradisaical, with every convenience for health and pleasure. And such delightful music, such admirable dancing, and the Parisian stage brought down bodily! Also a great deal of shopping is possible in curios, old jewelry, bric-à-brac. One can get rid of a great deal of money there without gambling, which is a kind of blood-letting the American loves. From Aix one can go to the Grande Chartreuse over the most romantic carriage drive in Europe. There is an old American brother there who will not die. When the brothers pass him, saying, "*Mes frères! il faut mourir!*" he answers, "No, you bet!"

The English ladies wear plain clothes at Aix. Sometimes they think the American smart set is too smart. However, they all go off together in shabby carriages, dine together at a neighboring *auberge, sans gêne*, and have a good time, or drop in at the Casino, see the last play or opera, and perhaps take a perfectly virtuous

squint at the gambling. No bitter east wind has ever visited Aix; so rheumatic folk love it. Then when one leaves, the Italian lakes are most convenient, and if one is not happy there he does not deserve to be happy anywhere.

One can go through the famous Mont Cenis tunnel to Turin, and come back again to Aix. One is always so glad to come back to Aix from anywhere. At the Europe, at the Grand Hôtel d'Aix, at the Splendide, the comforts are very great. Then, to have coffee out of doors, to hear a passing strain of music, to look up at a snow Alp, with a variety of companionship in the amusing cosmopolitan crowds, the glimpse of famous people—all is a condensation of travel which the Wandering American enjoys. One does the grand tour without buying a railway ticket, simply by staying at Aix-les-Bains.

The Wandering American is very pleased with Italian ways. The nobility have the most simple and charming manners. They never tell you disagreeable truths, which Anglo-Saxons feel it their duty to tell you. One sees the Italians of the best class at

Aix-les-Bains even after the sweet spot has put on its Autumnal livery, when it is more lovely than words can express in its reds and yellows, and the purple shadows fit over the needle-shaped peaks.

From Aix to everywhere is only a day, or at most two days. Even Venice, that delight of the world, is not much farther. "*Con viso che tacendo dicea, tac!*" One loves those stone balconies outside Daniello's, there to sit and dream of Venice and her old renown and watch the busy life of the quay; to wonder, to admire, to dream, to rest, and to enjoy silently. Venice has fused all ideas in her own overflowing fancy, and the Wanderer feels inclined to apotheosize the wondrous town, "that city which, though flooded, utters no cry for help," as he lies back on the cushions of his gondola and floats past her wealth of Gothic, Moorish and Byzantine palaces, her churches in the Renaissance and Italian Gothic, her beautiful palace of the Doges, her San Marco, her statue pillars with the saint and the lion, and crowning all, more lovely than all, her Campanile, rising above the city like a glorified spirit of peace and repose.



PRESERVING THE PROPRIETIES

"THE idiotic, stupid man!"—
She stamped her dainty toe—
"He begged for just a single kiss,
Just as he rose to go;
And naturally, then, of course,
I had to answer, 'No.'
It was not such a strenuous task—
Whatever made the idiot ask?"



ALL A MISTAKE

BELLE—Do you think the world is growing better?

FLORA—I thought so, my dear, until I married George to reform him.

A WOMAN

GOD, when He made you, made a flower—
 Exquisite, wonderful—and then
 Gave you the highway for a bower
 Crossed by the trampling feet of men.

The dust, the grime He bade you feel,
 Yet let naught mark your purity;
 He made you know the crushing heel
 Yet bear no stains for men to see.

What wormwood dews were food for you
 He knows, who bade you for a jest
 Give of your poison to that true,
 Poor fool who loved you best.

And so your eyes are like the eyes
 Of one who sees some holy thing;
 How could I guess them overwise
 From sight of sin and suffering?

And so your mouth is like the rose
 A child might lay at Mary's shrine;
 How could I guess what dregs of woes
 It tasted ere I made it mine?

JOHN WINWOOD.



PAID FOR ITSELF

LENA—Jack told Bessie she looked sweet enough to kiss in her new hat.
BELLE—Well, did he kiss her?
 “I suppose so. She said the hat was worth every cent she paid for it.”



REAL REFORMATION

CARRIE—Mr. De Sappy has quit smoking—quit for good.

FLORENCE—He burned up his pipes, did he?
 “Oh, he didn’t use a pipe, goosie. He quit cigarettes and burned up his clothes.”

OF MANY, ONE

By Baroness von Hutten

"I AM trying to get just enough coffee, Uncle William, to kill the taste of the goat's milk, and just enough milk to kill the taste of the chicory."

Mr. Elliott laid down his letters and looked up. "The coffee is infernal!" he said.

Miss Whiting took a piece of toast and looked at it reflectively. "Whom is your letter from?" she asked.

"My letter is from your prince. Where is your mother?"

"My mother is where she always is at this hour—in bed. And might one ask what my prince has to say?"

"Here—read it yourself."

Handing her the letter, he turned his chair around with a hideous squeak on the oiled bricks of the terrace and looked down at the highly colored scene before him.

He watched the boats swaying on the brilliant water, and then as his niece did not speak, turned and looked at her.

She had laid the letter down and was stirring her goat's milk and chicory absently.

"Well?" he asked.

Then Miss Whiting laughed. She was, unlike most beautiful women, more beautiful when she laughed.

"If I do, are you prepared to treat me with proper respect?"

"And *do* you?"

"Would you?"

"I don't know; what would your mother say?"

"Oh, mamma, Uncle William! Tell me, what do *you* think?"

The brown of her eyes was amber as she looked at him.

"What do I think, Win? He's hand-

some, hard up, and rather fast. What more could a reasonable American girl want?"

She laughed again. "And a prince!"

"And a prince." His eyes were half-closed in laughter, yet she felt their keen interrogation.

"I wish I were a queenly being in one of Dicky Davis's novels—he always arranges such matters with so much grace."

"But you're not, Win, and you've got an awful lot of money in your hands, my dear. Think well."

She nodded, thoughtful. "Yes, I must think well. I suppose—indeed, I know—that he needs my money. That dear old palace is half in ruins, and the Government wants to buy the pictures. It would be a great pity—"

"My dear child!" Mr. Elliott rose emphatically. "If you know the fellow is after your money, and if you are not a driveling idiot—"

"I think I'm not a driveling idiot, but—I am a moneybag, Uncle William; I am also a very nice girl, and it is at least possible—now *isn't* it?—that he might like *me*, too."

She rose, and pulling down a long spray of red-and-white-striped roses from the trellis, broke off a cluster and arranged them in her belt.

"Liking you isn't enough, Winifred. It is none of my business, but I should say, most decidedly, not enough. A man may, of course, fall in love with a girl who has money, but—and then—"

She smiled down at him. "You mean about the Marchesa Belfiore?"

"Yes. If I were you, my dear, I'd

ask my mother," he urged, feebly, lighting his pipe.

"Oh, no, you wouldn't. If you were me—I—you'd decide for yourself—myself—"

Then she went in and left him alone to grumble over the Paris edition of the *Herald*.

II

TEODORO ARIBERTO, Duca di Altamura and Principe di Santa Giulia, sat down in the cool, green twilight of Mrs. Whiting's salon and looked about. The room was strange to him, but several things in it were familiar—an oblong box of Capo di Monte, a green leather portfolio, several photographs and a heap of silk cushions on the divans.

He drew a deep breath. These odds and ends that he had known in Rome were somehow a comfort to him, and he needed comfort, for he was nervous.

A strong smell of heliotrope came in at the open window, and down on the lake someone was singing "Dormi Pure" in a sweet, clear voice.

Santa Giulia rose and closed the window; the song had unpropitious associations for him.

As he resumed his seat she came in.

He rose again and bowed low. She liked the bow European, in contradistinction to the jerk Anglo-Saxon; and she liked the fit of his clothes and his well-groomed black hair, which was brushed back from his forehead and waved a little before its career was checked by the shears.

"Miss Whiting," he began, "you are very kindly to receive me."

Being a young woman who disliked useless words, she merely bowed, and he went on.

She sat by the window, and the green glow from the closed blinds threw into relief the beauty of her clean-cut profile and of her shapely head, with its air of distinction. As the man talked he watched her and wondered. Her simplicity, both as to manner and clothes, was so differ-

ent from the simplicity of Italian girls.

"In short," he said, after a brief preamble in his careful English, "I have the honor, signorina, to ask you to be my wife."

She did not answer at once; she was staring steadily at the rings on her slim hands.

At length she looked up. "Prince," she began, "what I am going to say will surprise, perhaps shock you; but this is a very serious matter for us both—"

His slight gesture was all the response necessary, and she resumed:

"Since I met you that night at the Duchess's ball you have gone wherever I went, you have danced with me—you have, in short, in the Italian way, paid me serious attentions."

"Yes."

"And," she continued, calmly, but without looking at him, "you have, without speaking the words, told me a dozen times that you—love me. Am I not right?"

"Signorina, you are very beautiful. What could a man but love you?"

"Ah!" She took up a photograph from the table and studied it closely for a moment. "And now—to-day—you have asked me to marry you. Am I to understand that—you love me?"

She raised her beautiful, candid eyes to his, and he turned away.

"*Mademoiselle, pouvez-vous en douter?*"

"*Je ne m'en doute de rien—je demande.*"

He rose. "Miss Whiting," he answered, his accent intensified by his confusion, "I ask you to be my wife. Is that not enough?"

"I quite appreciate the honor you do me, Prince. But—if I were poor would you have asked me to marry you?"

He suppressed a smile. "You are very young, dear miss; you have a right to be romantic. I am thirty-five, and I am not romantic any more, *hélas!* But I will answer your question. You are beautiful and charming enough for all, but—I am a poor

man, and if you, too, were poor I could not have asked you to be my wife."

" You are clever, and you evade my question. I understood that much before. And that you love your old home, and your beautiful old palace, I understand that. What I want to know, what you must tell me, is this: Is it my money you want, or me?"

And he lied. " It is you!" he said, softly.

Her cheeks glowed suddenly, she started up, and then with an effort turned to the window.

" And the Marchesa Belfiore?" she said.

" The Marchesa Belfiore?" he stammered. " I don't understand you."

" People say," she answered, speaking very distinctly, " that you love her and that she loves you."

" *Per Bacco, signorina!* You have said me the catechism, and I have answered patiently, but *jeunes filles* do not ask men about their friendships with married women."

She had grown very pale, but she faced him bravely. " I know, Prince; but American girls are not like your *jeunes filles*. We read, you know—and I'm twenty-three. Why shouldn't I hear what is said of you and Madame Belfiore? I know her, and I like her, and if you and she love each other I am very sorry for you both. Only—

I cannot marry you in that case. Do you understand?"

" And if I told you that it is not true, what one says?"

" I should believe you."

" And if I told you that it has been true, but is not—shall not be any more?"

She hesitated. Then she rose and held out her hand. " I will leave it to you. If you can tell me, on your word of honor, either that you never loved her or that you no longer love her—then I will marry you, for—I like you, Santa Giulia."

He took her hand and looked at her. He knew what it meant, her " I like you, Santa Giulia."

The singing on the lake had recommenced, and in the dusk the odor of flowers seemed accentuated.

" Miss Whiting," he said, slowly, " I wish I could tell you a lie, but—God knows why—I cannot. I ruin myself. I like you and admire. I should like the Santa Giulia of *l'avenir* to have had such an ancestress, but—I cannot lie to you. I love Maria Belfiore, and I always shall love her."

His eyes gleamed with tears as he bent and kissed her hand.

" Thank you," she said. " I thank you with all my heart, and—good-bye."

Then he went, leaving her in the sweet, dusky room, alone.



FLY ADVICE

HE—I'm fishing for a wife.

SHE—Well, you'd better sign the pledge first, Mr. Clovenbreath. I fear you are using the wrong kind of bait.



THE WORST OF THE EVIL

BROOKS—Money makes fools of some people, you know.

Crooks—Quite true, but that wouldn't be so bad if they would get over it when their money is gone.

VOX ET PRÆTEREA NIHIL

SHE had a voice so wondrous sweet
 They always begged her sing;
 To listen was a perfect treat,
 But she—the dainty thing—
 Would then express entire disgust,
 And rise in manner slow,
 Exclaiming: “If I must, I must;
 I wish I needn’t, though!”

At concerts, when her help they sought,
 She stamped and cried: “Dear me!”
 Although the audiences thought
 No Melba sang as she.
 She designated all applause
 As quite a “dreadful bore,”
 And wished that there were stringent laws
 Preventing the encore.

At length one of her ardent friends—
 She was to sing that night
 Suggested: “When her song she ends,
 We’ll do what she thinks right;
 She always has expressed her views
 That encores cause her pain;
 Let us her goodness not abuse,
 Nor make her sing again.”

The first song o’er, as usual, she
 Prepared to be encored,
 But all refused religiously,
 As if her efforts bored.
 I cannot tell the reason why
 Or wherefore yet—except
 That straightway she sat down to cry,
 And wept, and wept, and wept!

C. F. R.



ON THE DAY OF REST

MR. BROOKS—My husband is of a retiring disposition.
MR. RIVERS—He attends church, does he not?
 “Yes; but he drops off to sleep as soon as he gets there.”

THE MIDNIGHT MATCHMAKER

By Gelett Burgess

SEE here," said the man in the Inverness cape, "do you mean to accuse me of breaking my glasses on purpose? You evidently don't know what a serious thing it is to be near-sighted."

The girl drew her opera-cloak about her shoulders and adjusted her hat, which was somewhat awry, before the mirror. Then she pulled her veil down smoothly about her chin and looked round. "Well, I don't know that you're quite clever enough for that, but it's rather suspicious," she said.

The young man was evidently in no hurry to leave the room. He leaned back in the armchair and popped his crush hat. Then he said, after a prolonged stare at the carpet: "Why?"

"You *said* you only wanted to run up here for a moment to get another pair of glasses, but you've kept me here half an hour, on one pretext and another."

"Haven't you had a good time?" he asked, without looking at her.

The girl made a little mouth and shrugged her shoulders. "So-so," she said. "Of course, I was very anxious to see your rooms, after all I've heard about them, and they're really very prettily fitted up. But you might have invited me to come up here some time with a chaperon. Mrs. Hewlitt would have been glad to take me."

The young man smiled grimly. "If you had waited for me to invite Mrs. Hewlitt, you'd have waited a long time," he said.

"Of course, it's a lark to come up alone," said the girl, as if she felt the

necessity of apologizing for her presence, "and if you hadn't taken advantage of it, and tried to kiss me, it would have been awfully jolly. But now I feel so horrid and common and guilty I can't enjoy it any more, and I'll hate to remember it, even. You ought to have known me better! I suppose you thought that if I'd come up to your rooms— I wonder what you *did* think! You have spoiled the whole thing now, and I'm worried about getting home. Come, we must go. I'd die if anyone found it out."

"No one's going to find it out," said the young man. "What are you afraid of, Millie? We've only to jump into the cab at the door, and no one can possibly see us. You know you can trust me, don't you?"

"If I didn't, do you think I would have come?" said the girl, proudly. She turned to go out, but her eyes still wandered about the room, examining the bric-à-brac, until suddenly the clock rang. "Good gracious! eleven o'clock!" she cried, and ran over and plucked at his sleeve. "Come, Oliver," she said, anxiously; "hurry, or they'll wonder where we have been so long."

Oliver rose reluctantly, with something apparently still unsaid. "It's too bad!" he complained, as he drew on his gloves. "These conventionalities are too absurd to be endured. I'd like to know what's the difference between your calling on me in my room and my calling on you in yours! There's nothing wrong about your being here, Millicent, and you know it!"

"Well, it isn't *your* fault that there isn't," she said, significantly.

Oliver sighed, and then lighted a candle at the gas fixture. "I suppose I know what you mean," he said, sadly. "You're letting me down easy, that's all. You know very well why I wanted to kiss you, and why I still want to. It's no foolishness; I'm in earnest!"

It was very evident that she did know what he meant, for his remark seemed to make her still more anxious to get away and change the conversation as well as the scene. The visit had amused her, but the striking of the clock made her nervous. It was on her lips to say, "Well, what *did* you mean?" and have it over, but she decided to wait until they were safe in the carriage. She opened the door suddenly and was about to step into the hall, but she fell back with a little suppressed scream of terror. Directly confronting her stood a man with a lantern and a revolver. He, too, drew back for a moment, and then advanced, with a threatening gesture.

His calling was sufficiently evident to the two by his stealthy attitude and the pistol, which he held pointed ready to fire. At his startling and unforeseen presence, so malignly aggressive, the two retreated into the room, now lighted only by the wavering light of the candle Oliver held, at a loss what to do in this dangerous emergency. The burglar, however, quickly instructed them.

"Hands up, quick, now!" came from between his teeth. "Don't stir, or I'll settle for you both!"

Oliver's wits came back to him, and regardless of the consequences, he was about to spring at the man, when Millicent laid a hand on his arm. "Stop!" she cried; "for heaven's sake, don't touch him, or he'll shoot! Think of me! What shall I do, if there's trouble here?"

The young man, baffled and furious at the suppression of his attack, fell back, seeing the force of her appeal. His hands were, indeed, tied by her presence. The burglar, too, was not slow to realize the situation, and grinned wickedly.

"So that's yer little game, is it? I'm afraid I interrupted a quiet little call, eh? You weren't expecting company, eh?" and he seemed mightily to enjoy their plight. "Sorry I intruded, miss, but biz is biz, and I thought it was this gent's night out!"

"See here," Oliver interrupted, "I'll give you just five minutes to get out of this, and I'll promise not to follow you up. Clear out of this now, and next time you come I'll be ready for you!"

"Go, go!" cried Millicent, on whose nerves the tensity of the scene was exerting itself.

"Much obliged for this entoosiastic reception," said the burglar. "They ain't nobody sitting up for *me* to come home. I guess I'll look around for a little while and see what's doin'."

"For heaven's sake, go!" Millicent implored, at the edge of tears. "Go away, *please!*"

"Seems to me you're pretty anxious to be let alone," the burglar remarked. "Looks like they ought to be something in this for me."

Oliver now put in a word, saying, "Here's ten dollars, if you get out immediately by the way you came in. I'll promise not to call for help or notify the police if you leave just as quick as you can. Here; I'll let you out the front door!" The sight of Millicent's tears was working on him powerfully, but the burglar saw his advantage.

"I see," said the man; "afraid of a little talky-talk, eh? The lady doesn't care to testify in court and be wrote up in the papers. I understand. But that's worth more than ten dollars, boss; it's worth more to me, and it's worth more to her—ain't it, miss? Suppose you make it a twenty!"

"Twenty, then!" Millicent exclaimed; "twenty, if you go immediately."

"I don't know about twenty, after all," the burglar insisted, with exasperating coolness, shaking his revolver playfully. "I expected to make more'n a twenty out of this job. Say forty."

"I'll see you arrested first!" Oliver

exclaimed, out of all patience at the extortion. "You needn't think you can blackmail us as hot as you please. Twenty or nothing!"

Millicent now burst into sobs. "Oh, Oliver, pay him the forty dollars!" she pleaded. "I can't stand it!"

"But I haven't got forty dollars with me," said Oliver. "Besides, if I agree, he'll only jump up the price again!"

"Let's sit down and talk it over," said the burglar. "Or would you rather yell for the cops? If you do, I'll have to shoot, and the perlice will find me alone with the lady, which will be worse'n being found alone with you! An' she'll be a-weepin' over a bleedin' corpse, into the bargain! I say, let's sit down and talk it over friendly. It ain't often I get a chance to arbertrate like this, and I'm ready to do the square thing."

There was nothing for it, then, but to assent to this ridiculous and undignified arrangement, and Oliver and Millicent took chairs together, while the burglar seated himself comfortably on a wide couch. In his hand the revolver still twinkled wickedly.

Millicent's eyes ran from the clock to the burglar and from the burglar to the clock again. Every minute made the case harder. But the man grew more cheerful. "Got a smoke?" he asked of his host.

Oliver pointed to a box of cigars on the mantel, and the visitor helped himself, tossed one to the young man and reseated himself. "That is, if the young lady don't object," he added, with mock courtesy.

Millicent tossed her head in contempt. "Fine evening," the man remarked, cordially.

"Oh, can't you have pity on us?" cried Millicent, unable to stand the suspense. "Do say what you want, and go! I'll give you all I have, if you'll only go away!"

"We'll have to make terms with you, I suppose," Oliver added. "Name your price, and we'll see what we can do. But, as I said, I haven't forty dollars with me. Shall I give you a cheque?"

The burglar grinned. "I can't use cheques in my business, thanks," he said, drily. "They're too liable to be stopped by telephone. Go ahead, smoke up, young felier!" and he puffed luxuriously at his own cigar.

Oliver, exasperated and anxious as he was, swallowed his mortification and resolved to make the best of a bad situation and humor the man. He lighted the cigar, therefore, and said, "What do you want, then? Let's get down to business."

"Oh, hang business!" said the burglar. "I can't talk without a drink. What you got here, anyway?"

There was a decanter on the table, and from it he helped himself, after pouring two glasses for the others. To one of these he pointed affably with his pistol. "Have one with me," he said. "We'll drink to the young lady here; she's a peach! I'm proud to be in such company, and to have you make me at home in this way. Well, here goes!" and he tossed off his drink, with an unremitting glance over the top of his glass the while.

Oliver drank with an unhappy smile. "I can't refuse *that* toast," he said, apologetically.

The burglar, refreshed and mellowed, satisfied with his anomalous position as dictator, allowed his glance to rove about the room. The trophy of arms on the wall interested him greatly, though the pair of dueling pistols aroused his scorn. "They wouldn't be much use in a fix like this," he observed. "Bully old knives, though," he said, testing their edges on his thumb. "I s'pose, now, all this old junk is hot stuff, and worth all kinds of money, but it don't go with me. You're devilish shy of plate! They ain't much swag here."

By this time, edging round the room, watching the two narrowly, he had reached a small table on which lay a card case. "What's this?" he said, and he opened it and took out an engraved card.

Millicent's rage, suppressed with great effort, at the gross indignity of

her position, flamed at this minor insult. "That's mine, you coward! Do you have to rob women, too? Can't you be satisfied with your dirty trade without that?"

The burglar leered at Oliver. Then he read the name on the card. "Miss Raybridge, 2115 East avenue," he drawled. "So that's your name, is it, miss?"

Millicent bit her lip at her stupidity. The fat was in the fire now, and her blush gave the man his cue. "Miss Raybridge visitin' her gentlem'n friend at eleven P.M. Scandal in high life. Prominent young clubman in trouble. By the way," he said, "I missed your name when we was introduced. What did you say it was?"

Oliver, white with fury, kept his silence as well as he could. Millicent's foot was tapping the floor. The burglar walked toward the secretary. "They's more'n one way to kill a cat besides a-kissin' of it to death," he remarked. "Let's have a look at the desk."

He fumbled among the pigeonholes, keeping a sharp sidelong glance at Oliver. He drew out a bundle of letters and shuffled them over, looking at the addresses. "Mr. Oliver Herkomer, 21 Randall Mansions," he read aloud. "I guess that's the party, eh?" Not content with this, he calmly opened the sheet inside an envelope. "Rotten bad writin'," he remarked. "I wish these highrollers used typewriters more. Let's see what's up. P'raps the young lady would like to listen."

"Oh, I say," cried Oliver, who had caught sight of the handwriting, "let my letters alone, will you? Take everything else you want, but don't you read those letters!"

"Private business, eh? Don't care for to have 'em read out loud? Well, I'll just take a look through for luck. No, you better stay right where you are, young feller!" and he held his pistol ready. His eye dropped to the signature of the note. "'Kitty,'" he read—"who's Kitty? Perhaps Miss — what's-her-name—Raybridge,

knows." He looked over to her interrogatively.

"I don't know, and I don't care," she said, defiantly, but her looks belied her.

"Well, all right," said the burglar; "here's another. Mrs. Abram Hewlett requests the pleasure of Mr. Herkomer's presence on December 5th, to meet Mr. Godfrey Ballard, nine till 'leven.' That's to-day, ain't it? Wonder what Mrs. Abram Hewlett would think if she knew how long it took to get home."

"See here," cried Oliver, fiercely; "drop that, please! You had better quit. If you dare to insult this young lady with another comment, I'll kill you! Miss Raybridge is engaged to be married to me, and she has a perfect right to be here. If you think you can blackmail us you're mistaken. I've stood this long enough, and it's time we settled and you got out of this. Are you going to keep us here all night with this tomfoolery? Don't threaten me with that pistol; I'm not afraid of it. If it hadn't been for the young lady's being here, you'd have been a dead man half an hour ago!"

"Don't get worried," replied the burglar; "I guess it's time to have another drink." He went up to the table and poured out a glass. "So you two are supposed to be engaged, eh? Why didn't you say so before? Let me congratulate you. Miss Raybridge, have you got any objections?"

Millicent was visibly confused. The liberties the man had taken were past forbearance, and her pride rose. "It's none of your business!" she answered, in disgust.

The burglar smiled sarcastically. "Then your little bluff don't go," he remarked to Oliver. "This is so sudden, you know!" He looked audaciously at the two. "Pretty good match, though, for all I can see. Lady's a greyhound and the gent's well fixed." Then he turned to Millicent. "What's the trouble?" he asked; "somebody else in it?"

The lady hid her face in her hands and refused to answer. The burglar turned his attention to the young

man and gave him an elaborate wink. "Throwed down, eh? Better try it on again. I'll see what I can do for you. Perhaps we can bring her round."

The scene, atrocious as it was, forced a smile from Mr. Herkomer. "How long do you intend to keep this up?" he asked.

"I'm going to stay with it until she says she'll have you," replied the burglar, with a quick decision. The remark seemed to please him, and he rubbed his hands. "Say," he continued, "how much you got in your wad?"

Oliver opened his purse and felt in his pockets, counting out his change. "Twenty-seven dollars," he said, finally. Millicent looked up with a ray of hope on her face.

"Perhaps you could make it thirty if you tried good and hard," the man suggested.

"Look in that left-hand drawer, below the pigeonholes," said Oliver.

The man opened the drawer and took out a few bills. "Five dollars," he announced. "That'll do. Now we'll talk biz. I had expected to pull more out of this job, but then I didn't look to have so much fun. I've rather took a fancy to the pair of you, and you've been square. See here, now. Just as soon as the young lady says she'll have you, on the square, and no funny business—for keeps, honor of a lady—then I'll get out, and not before. What d'you say to that? I say it's handsome, and I'm doin' you both a favor."

Millicent had looked up and then down again. She awaited Oliver's answer eagerly. It did not take him long to decide. "Of course not!" he answered. "Do you think I'd consent to forcing a lady's hand that way?"

The burglar laughed. "All right, then," he said, and poured himself another drink. Millicent looked at the clock. Then she drew her chair nearer to Oliver's.

"Oliver," she whispered, so that the burglar could not hear.

"Well!" said the young man.

"It's very late; I don't know what they'll be thinking at home!"

"I don't see how I can help it," said Oliver. "I can't rush him, for he's watching me all the time. If you weren't here I'd risk it, but if anything happens to you on my account you'll be in a worse fix than you're in now. There's nothing to do that I can see."

"Unless—" suggested the lady.

"Yes, unless—" he answered.

There was silence for a minute or so. The burglar had taken another cigar, and was regarding them benevolently from the further side of the room, watching his leaven work.

Millicent drew her chair still closer. "What did you mean by saying you were in earnest when you wanted to kiss me?" she whispered, softly.

"I meant that I wanted to marry you, of course," he replied, restraining a desire to look at her.

"Did you really?" she said. "Then why didn't you ask me?"

A tremor in her voice aroused Oliver's hopes. "I didn't dare," he asserted. "That was why I asked you to come up here, but when you wouldn't kiss me I thought it was no use, and you meant to refuse me, and I couldn't stand it! Millie, would you have said 'Yes?'"

"A little louder, please," interrupted the burglar. "Speak up; I'm in charge of this party. What's she saying?"

The look Oliver cast him now was for the first time that evening indulgent. It was even friendly.

"What did she say?" the burglar insisted.

"I really didn't hear it myself," Oliver protested.

The burglar, under the genial influence of a third glass, turned to Miss Raybridge. "Well, miss, what *did* you say?" he demanded.

"I said 'Yes!'" she announced, calmly.

"Good-night, then," the man said, affably, as he helped himself generously to the Cabanas. "I'll expect to

get cards for the wedding, sure. I'd like to give the bride away, but you can trust me. So long!"

Hardly had he closed the door

when Millicent, who did not seem to be in so much of a hurry as before, turned to Oliver.

"Who is Kitty?" she demanded.



A COLLEGE GIRL

A FAIR and winsome lass was she,
In figure neat and trim;
Her only fault appeared to be
Too great a love for "Jim."

She would not go to drive or sail,
To please her best friend's whim,
If such an outing would curtail
The hours she pledged to "Jim."

She talked of gowns which, at their best,
Would shock the very prim;
And even those, so she confessed,
Were made and worn for "Jim."

I learned to know her well enough,
At last, to scoff at "Jim,"
Which always brought a sharp rebuff,
Delivered with a vim.

And yet she listened to my plea,
Which she did not condemn,
For though she still loved "Jim," you see
She spelled it "G—y—m."

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



A PARADOXICAL TALESMAN

JUDGE—Have you formed any opinion on this case?

WOULD BEIGH JUROR—No, sir; I haven't mentioned it to my wife.



WINNING HIS WAY

SHE—Why are you so anxious to marry my daughter?

HE—To settle a bet. A friend bet me that you wouldn't make a good mother-in-law.

THE CONQUERING WILL

By Harriet Prescott Spofford

THERE was no doubt that he was a masterful man. He ruled everyone on shore as he had ruled everyone at sea. His wife had never meant to marry him; but she did. When the fleet went into Asiatic waters she had declared she would not follow; but she did. When the child died she had wished to clothe herself in black; but she didn't. Wherever he was Captain Gilbert's will was the only will. Whenever she resisted him she felt like a wave shattering itself to foam against a rock in the mid-seas.

Sometimes she wondered if there were any hypnotic quality about him. Her mother had said she was possessed. But she really knew better. So far as she was concerned, she knew that the reason the Captain had his own way was simply because she loved him. And so far as everyone else was concerned, she was glad he did have his own way.

She had at first admired Captain Gilbert more than she loved him—admired his superb and stalwart figure of the large, heroic type; his Greek head, ringed over with short, yellow curls; his bold features, his eyes, that had in them the blue of the skies but also the glance of the eagle; his commanding air. And moreover, his manner, when he chose, had an inexpressible charm that carried all before it. No one dared contend with him—and then no one wished to do so. No wonder he was a masterful man. He was never resisted; and the habit had become nature.

Indeed, his wife hardly knew, after a while, when she had a wish other than her husband's. It is true she thought blue more becoming, but he

liked to see her in pink, and she always went about like a lovely blush rose. It was also true that there had been a time when she cared for dancing; but Captain Gilbert would not endure the familiarity of the waltz, and so she never waltzed—when Captain Gilbert was looking. It is true she enjoyed the theatre; but Captain Gilbert prepared to go to church, and she went to church, and felt afterward very righteous and content.

But on the other hand, she loved riding; and the Captain kept her provided with a mount that was the envy of all the other women in the field. He himself rode like a centaur, and she never admired him more than in the saddle. She was fond of sea bathing, and he took for her every Summer a little place by the seaside, and none of the mer-people ever disported themselves with more sense of possession of the deep sea caves than they did. She would have enjoyed land travel; but Captain Gilbert preferred seafaring, so that she never saw any other world than the world of waters. She recovered from her seasickness after a few days, and then took keenest pleasure in the bounding and soaring from billow to billow, as if she were a seagull sitting on the wave or flying over it. Alone, too, in the vast region of sunlit sky and sea, or when night carried space into dark infinity, or when they rode triumphant over storm, and every man on the yacht was a machine moved by the Captain's will, he seemed to her each time a more positive potency than before.

But if the Captain had his own way

in the outside things of life his way was usually right. It was because he said that it simply should be done that the salary of Dr. Saintly was raised to living limit. It was he who, when the rest of the town where he lived when off duty frowned down an embezzling bank officer who had served his term in prison, insisted that the man should be helped to work and to respect again. It was he who brought home a forsaken woman of the place, and required civility for her so long as she did right. "If there is one thing certain," said the Captain, "it is that love is the best thing in the world. And I mean, Fanny, that you and I shall be as much at one with this great spirit filling the universe as holding the helpful hand to all can make us."

Perhaps, however, the Captain would not have carried things so before him if all his little world had not known of certain splendid achievements in the sea fights, giving him, in a measure, the right to his own way, giving him also the wounds that enforced his retirement and shortened his life. Wherever they were, people turned to look at him and to approve, and it gratified Mrs. Gilbert as much as when they turned to look at her—she was the woman whom this wonder among men had chosen out of all the women on the earth. But they always found it well worth their while to look at her. "The Lord may have thought He made the most beautiful thing possible when He made this rose," the Captain said to her once, stooping to a wayside bramble, "but I think He made the most beautiful thing when He made a woman. And you are a woman and a rose, too!"

"You make me blush," said Mrs. Gilbert; "and here, on the street!" They were going home from church across the fields. "Yes, I should wonder why I was given such a wife if it were not that she has such a husband," he added, laughing. And when Captain Gilbert laughed Mrs. Gilbert felt that the world went well, and she laughed, too. And she never

looked prettier than when her red lips curved apart over the rice-pearl teeth, and disclosed ravishing little dimples in either velvet cheek.

But possibly Captain Gilbert could not have so completely dominated his wife if she had not felt in him a fine superiority to the small things of life and had not had a fearsome joy in sometimes following his thought out into what he called the Fourth Dimension. "This earth and its envelopings are beautiful," he said, "but when I remember that there are colors we cannot see, sounds too fine for our ears, I know we are only spelling the alphabet of all we shall find—out there. Nights when I have walked the deck, virtually alone, and have seen the stars sentineling the great courts of space beyond space, I have felt sure they were made for no idleness—that there were reasons for their being; and in some form or other we shall tread their mazes and come out upon the reason for all things." She did not entirely understand him; but it may be that she admired him all the more on that account.

But there was one thing in which Captain Gilbert failed to have his own way. One thing?—two things! He could not hinder men from staring at Mrs. Gilbert, and he could not hinder Mrs. Gilbert from showing—in the mildest mannered way—that she was conscious of the gaze and possibly not unpleased. "I am sure I can't help their looking at me," she pouted, turning away from the window.

"You can help making eyes at them!" he replied.

"Captain Gilbert! What language!"

"Suiting the word to the action."

"And as if I could help my eyes!" the tears making them like live jewels.

"I know they're beautiful eyes!" said the Captain, remorsefully. "But they're my eyes! They don't belong to every fool going by."

"I never knew such a tyrant! You're like the man in the 'Morte d'Arthur' who wanted his wife hideous before the court, but beautiful when alone with him."

"Precisely," said Captain Gilbert, laughing. "And I wish we had those days back—days when a man owned his wife, like any other precious thing, till a stronger took her—"

"It's always a stronger that takes her, one way or another."

"He'll be stronger than the laws of the universe if he takes you, that's all," said the Captain, lifting her in his arms and walking down the room with her as if she had been a child; "for by all the laws of the universe you are mine! And mine you will be forever, alive or dead!" And, to her troubled amazement, he was sobbing. "Fanny," he cried, "if you married another man after I died—after I died—if I were in the farthest star of the farthest heavens I should come back and punish him!"

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Gilbert. Then, through her own tears: "Why not leave that to me?"

Mrs. Gilbert was one of the women with whom this brigand-like way of making love is effective. And when, shortly afterward, Captain Gilbert betook himself to the farthest star and left her widowed, she missed the excitations and the raptures and the sense of being adored, even if tyrannized over; and she was not at all consoled by the fact that she looked charming in black, which there was no one now to forbid her.

But a little time works wonders. Mrs. Gilbert one day woke to the fact that she was free, with no one to say her nay; free as a bird in the air. At least, she would have been free if she had had any money to be free with. But Captain Gilbert's half-pay had stopped with his breath, and there was a delay about pension business and about other money, during which Mrs. Gilbert found herself so hard pressed as to be almost in despair about ways and means. And when Mr. Mercer proposed that she share a million with him, she was in more minds than one about accepting the idea, and she actually asked for time. Captain Gilbert, she reasoned, would never want her to be

put about this way for money—her mourning was positively shabby. And she thought of it very seriously—it might do—Mr. Mercer was a gentleman. But when he called for his reply she came down, white to her lips, so white that she was ghastly, and said it was impossible.

It was the same way with Dr. Vaughn. It seemed so eminently respectable, so altogether what the gossips would have called too good a chance to lose, she would be so well cared for—and she was just on the point of yielding. But after a night's reflection she wrote that it was out of the question, her hand shaking so that her script looked like a field of wheat bowed in the wind.

And after that she went for a while so sedately, so demurely, so entirely as the fond and faithful widow should, that who but the rector should be acknowledging her fascination? And she knew in her heart that she would be a capital wife for a clergyman, that she might have the parish under her little thumb—she, a helpmeet better than the best! She said to herself it was a pity if she could not do as she pleased; she smiled on him; she came near giving him her hand to kiss in token of the ring it might wear presently. And then she sent him in his turn the hurried note that laid all hope low.

Captain Gilbert had been lost to the breathing world almost half a dozen years, and his wife was as much like a lovely blooming rose as ever, when John Mowbray crossed her path. And he not only crossed it, but he obstructed it. The years had passed quietly; her affairs had adjusted themselves; although she could have spent more, she was no longer in need of money. She had almost forgotten Mr. Mercer and his successors in misfortune. And John Mowbray was a man of an unfamiliar and engaging type. He loved music, the opera, Wagner; she had never had enough of music in her life. He was more or less of a student, acquainted with books, a haunter of libraries; it seemed to her that he held the gates open to

a fair and inviting plaisir. Well born and well bred, he had the air, without having traveled much, of knowing men and manners and the world; but to travel was his intention—and she saw the gates open to a life of infinitely wider interest than this small daily round. He was on the sunny side, as she was; with a most agreeable personality, with a delightful courtesy, and as she began to suspect, with a sincere affection for herself.

He had come to see her, that snowy night, through all the storm, bringing her an armful of great red roses. There was something very pleasant about his coming in; it gave her a feeling of protection, emphasized the idea of shelter. She heaped the fire and presently the ruddy flames danced over the room and the flowers, and over the pretty woman disposing them in their bowls and jars, till it all seemed to John Mowbray, still warming his hands at the blaze, the ideal of a home. What a place to come to every night! What a place never to go away from! What a dream!

She knew what was coming very well. Some subtle instinct made her try to fortify herself against it. She sat down behind a table and leaned forward, rearranging with twinkling fingers the roses in the vase that nearly hid her face. And then in another moment he was half-kneeling beside her, and he was murmuring, "Fanny, Fanny! let it be real—this dream. I am dreaming! Tell me not to wake! Say, dear, say that you love me!" And before she knew it the strong arms were about her, and she was hiding her face on his shoulder.

What an evening of deep, serene happiness it was! Side by side they looked into the future, and its glow shed a light over them. "It is too much, too much happiness," she said, as they parted. "Something will hinder. I—I shall not be allowed—" And she grew very pale.

"Thank heaven, there is no one to allow or to disallow," said John Mowbray. "You are not now the young

girl to be dominated, but the woman whose beautiful nature has developed the power to choose, and I am crowned and blessed by your choice!"

"I am afraid—I am afraid—" she said, as he bade her good-night.

"Of what, my love?" he asked her.

"Oh, of nothing, of nothing, so long as you are here!" she said, clinging to him more closely.

And "I am afraid!" she repeated again, as she went up stairs, though trembling with joy.

She had half a mind to sit up that night and not go to sleep at all. She dropped the curtain quickly as she saw the stars sparkling in the sky from which the snow clouds were already blowing away. The thought of that farthest star would come back and make her shiver. But she was tired out with emotion—with hope and joy and fear—and she fell asleep in the big armchair just as Captain Gilbert came into the room, strong, stalwart, mighty, and looking like the hero of some Viking legend.

The wind had blown a fine color into his face; his curls were sprayed with the melted snow, his eyes were as dazzlingly blue as a noonday sky. "I have come a long way to see you, my wife," he said, and the old familiar tone rang sweetly through all the chambers of her heart. "And I never saw you lovelier. How dear, how beautiful you are! How long we have belonged to each other! Do you remember the night by the gate under the honeysuckles, when you reached out your hand in the dark, uncertain if I was there, and suddenly I clasped it? Dear hand! I have never, never let it go! I never will! I saw a sapphire as blue as Lyra on my way here. I will have it for this little hand—only the hand is so slight, the sapphire is so heavy. How quiet it is here—it is always quiet about you, my wife—you are so serene, and your husband is so stormy! Here is the smell of roses that always hovers about you—oh, how sweet, how sweet you are! Up, and let me sit down and hold you in my arms, you featherweight! There,

rest the dear head. What makes you shiver so? It is warm. I am here—your husband. Warm? I am warm to my marrow, being with you, holding you, living again the delicious life we used to live. Oh, what life will be again with you, most perfect of women, most faithful of wives! I have been so cold, so far off, so longing for you! What ways I have traversed, what have I encountered, just for this hour! And it is worth it all. There are great things in store for us, little woman. Lean your cheek on mine—how velvet soft, how warm—you are mine, mine, mine—”

She heard, she remembered no more, but woke with the sun pouring into the window and streaming over her through the crimson warmth of the geraniums, and all her heart expanded with the old affection.

Suffused still with the mood of the night, she made her toilette and went down, thoughtless, reckless, almost gay—and met John Mowbray coming through the door, his sleigh-bells still jangling at the gate—he had come to take her sleighing. But at the first sight of his eager, expectant face she stopped. All her bloom fell away, she shook like a leaf; and he sprang forward, thinking she was about to fall. “No, no, no!” she cried. “Forget last night! Forget everything! It is impossible! It is out of the question. I am Captain Gilbert’s wife still. Captain Gilbert—will not—will not allow it.”

And then she dropped fainting into his arms.

She did not, however, lose consciousness entirely. She knew very well that John Mowbray was covering her face with kisses while carrying her to the sofa. The blood surged over her forehead in a conviction of guilt, and then she turned her face to the wall.

“What does this mean?” cried John Mowbray.

“He—he has been here,” she faltered.

“Who has been here?” he demanded.

“Captain Gilbert.”

“What—what is it you say?” he exclaimed, springing to his feet.

“He was here last night—I am not out of my head. Oh, no, I am not beside myself! He has been here before—the same way—whenever—Oh, see how unworthy I am!”

And she covered her face with her hands.

He seated himself on the edge of the sofa and took down the two hands, holding them in his own.

“You mean you dreamed last night,” he said.

“Oh, no, no! Dreamed? Oh, it was too real! Dreamed? I don’t know—Do you suppose it could be just a dream? Always the same dream, only with differences? And he so all he used to be when he was best and tenderest, making me feel that he was my husband forever and ever, that I— Oh, you see I love him still!”

“I should be ashamed of you if you didn’t!” said John Mowbray, sternly. “But you love me, too! You know you do!”

“How can I love two men at once?” cried Fanny.

“You don’t. One of us is an angel in heaven. I shall never have the least jealousy of your affection for him. You and I are on the earth. And when we are as the angels in heaven we shall never marry or be given in marriage. Come, you need the air. Where is your thick cloak, your furs, a hood? Here is the sleigh at the gate. We will drive up the river. On the way we will stop at the rectory—”

“But—but—”

“Not a but about it. I shall have the right then to shield my wife in her dreams and from her dreams. And I don’t believe anyone will come where I am to challenge him!” And Fanny Gilbert had found again the power that surrounded her like a fortress and the will that was perhaps as strong as Captain Gilbert’s will.

It seemed that John Mowbray must have been right. After the sleigh ride and the brief ceremony at the rector’s he took his wife away and into

a round of gaieties that gave her no time to reflect. And then came the voyage overseas and the travel that should so fill thought and memory as to leave no room for the past. Under all the novelty and pleasure and excitement, and Mr. Mowbray's constant presence and care, she became a new creature. Blooming with fresh being, enlarged to the larger life, her prettiness became beauty, her liveliness sparkling, and her sweetness, to John Mowbray, enchanting. His pride in her was equal to his passion. It was with pleasure that he saw men's eyes follow her, and women's, too. When she rode, her trim grace and dauntless spirit hung afterward before his own eyes, as if he had seen Dian and her train pass by. At the opera, as she stood a moment, easy, gracious, dropping off her cloak and revealing a dazzle of jewels and gleaming tissues, of eyes like jewels, too, of roses, cream and blush, and of smiles, and when he saw her breathless, rapt in the music and the play, he felt a joy of possession that was like a pain; but with the emotion came a vague fear of its evanescence.

The premonition was not felt at once, however. There was a season of unassailed rapture before he noticed that Mrs. Mowbray had become very restless, seeking perpetually some new object, and so absent-minded that he sometimes spoke twice or thrice before she heard him. Glowing with color and life and happiness in the evening, in the morning she would be as pale and sad and languid as if she had danced all night with witches, so that he wondered if she slept at all. She ate almost nothing, started at every sound, laughed nervously at nothing, and her eyes filled with tears likewise at nothing. She began to grow very thin. Suddenly he perceived that she was wasting away before his eyes.

Like Asa of old, Mr. Mowbray had recourse to the physicians, and that without loss of time. But as she persisted that nothing ailed her, and had no symptoms to present other

than those they saw, they could do little beyond administering tonics, which were as idle as spring water.

"My dear one," he said to her at last, "tell me—what is it? There is something you hide from me. My precious one, my wife, tell me; are you unhappy?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" she cried, lifting her hands passionately. "I am wretched! I am wretched!"

He turned as white as she. "Fanny!" he cried.

"Oh, not the way you think!" she cried. "But, oh! I cannot tell you!"

He sat down beside her and took her in his arms. "Whatever it is, you must tell me," he said, gently. "You are my one thought in life. I can do nothing to serve you if I am in the dark."

"It is I!—It is I who am in the dark!" she wept.

"Tell me what you mean, my darling," he urged her.

"I—I don't know if I am your darling!" she exclaimed. "I don't know who I am!"

"Fanny, dearest, I don't understand. Be reasonable, my little wife, let me know."

"Am I your wife? or am I his?"

"Dearest!"

"I don't know. He comes—he has come every night—"

He clasped her convulsively in his arms. "I live a double life," she said, moving herself feebly yet resistingly. "All day I am yours. All night I am his!"

"Dear child! dear little one! You are ill. You are letting a dream—"

"It is not like any dream—"

"But, dream or not, it is when all your powers are submerged in sleep, when you are not fully yourself—"

"Oh, but in the daylight—"

"Yes, in the daylight, when you are you, then—then you are only mine!"

"I am afraid—I am afraid," she sighed. "Every night when I go to sleep—I don't know what may happen. Some night, some night, he will take me!" And her voice died to a whisper.

"Never!" he cried. "Never, while I am beside you."

At that moment, as she lay in his arms, they both were possessed by a great shuddering and fear. It was dark all about them, as if it were already night. A wind seemed to fill the room and then to hold its breath, a wind that might have been blowing from nowhere to nowhere, but hanging now still and chill.

"Hold me, hold me fast, John!" she murmured. "He has come for me!" Her arms fell, her head drooped nerveless over his arm. "Oh, John, I love—"

The lips, wide open, said no more. And in the instant of that last sigh John Mowbray knew, by some other than the sense of sight, that Captain Gilbert, masterful, laughing, debonair, towered like a shaft of sunlight before him.

"You are wronged of nothing," a voice that had no sound was ringing in his ears. "The bindweed falls

that leans upon a straw. You would have made her happy if you might. But you could not conquer the unconquerable will. And I have come for my own!"

"As a destroying force—destroying joy, destroying life!" cried John Mowbray. "And I defy you! For though you carry her beyond your farthest star, she loves me best, and I will follow you!"

"Spirit to spirit, flesh to flesh, John Mowbray. She is mine!"

There was a flutter of the purple-veined eyelids in the face that had fallen from his arm, a tremor of the lips, a long, slow, bubbling sigh. Slipping, slipping from his grasp, a lifeless heap lay on the floor—and by all the avenues through which the viewless thing may reach the soul, John Mowbray saw Captain Gilbert fading into an intenser light, his wife held close beside him. And then, though it was broad noonday, the world was black and still.



NIGHT IN THE DESERT

WITH star-dust scintillant the vault is sown;
But the vague vastitude of lower air
Is as a purple shroud about the bare
And billowy sand-waste ominously lone.
Heavy with sleep, no more the camels moan;
Slumber has sealed the pious pilgrim's prayer;
And save the lion, loping from his lair,
There is no wanderer in this desert zone.

The silence quivers if one starts from dreams,
But not with sound. The rigor of suspense
Were broken could a bird or brook but sing.
But ah! the stillness that so breathless seems!
The awful solitude, the imminence
As of some unimaginable thing!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



CHERUBIC CONSIDERATION

MR. BEAUMAN—Tommy, does your sister know I am here?
TOMMY—Yes, sir; but rest easy, for I didn't tell pop.

THE LAW'S LOOPHOLE

THE LADY TO THE LAWYER

“ **L** EARNED sir, I've come to you
 With a broken heart—boo-hoo!
 Won't you please to see me through
 The divorce court's pathway stony?
 He has always been to me
 Just as good as good can be;
 But I'm *tired!* Now, don't you see?
 Try to get big alimony!”

THE LAWYER TO THE LADY

“ Tired? Shameful! Did he dare
 Treat you thus? A fiend, I swear!
 Ah, the things that women bear
 With such sweet humility!
 Case is clear as clear can be—
 Fifty dollars is the fee!
 Thanks! Yes, on these grounds, you see:
Incompatibility!”

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



SURE TO BE WELCOMED

DOCTOR—I don't expect to meet all my patients in the next world.
FRIEND—No; but those you do meet will be sure to give you a warm reception.



NEITHER SLIGHTED

IN Spring life's sweetest song is sung;
 In notes of joy the tale is told
 Of newest fads found for the young
 And newest wrinkles for the old.



THE ONLY EXPLANATION

MISS BONDS—A young man committed suicide because I refused him.
HE—You don't say! He surely overestimated your income.

REINCARNATION

By Edith Sessions Tupper

I LIVED in Egypt once, I know,
For oft at night in heavy sleep,
From mountains crested high with snow,
O'er rivers winding dark and deep,
O'er seas and plains and vales I go,

And come at last where sunrise gleams
With shafts of scarlet, pink and gold,
On palm trees guarding sluggish streams,
On tombs and temples centuries old—
I see them all in fitful dreams.

And there's one palace vast and grand;
A terrace stretching far and wide;
An avenue across the sand,
With statues grim on either side,
And colonnades on every hand.

That was my home. A princess I,
With dusky hair and velvet lips,
Whose beauty rare to glorify,
My poets vowed none could eclipse,
My lovers swore none could deny.

And many loved me. But to you,
A stalwart, handsome, fair-haired slave,
With curling lips and eyes of blue,
And tender touch—to you I gave
My heart. My soul you knew—you knew.

We heard at dawn the fountains play
Along the splendid marble floors;
And sweet as scent of lotus spray,
Stole music through the latticed doors—
Now loud, now soft, now far away.

I see again the evil face
That glowers between the curtains red;
The knife—that e'en in my embrace
Struck swift and sure, and left you dead,
The blood-jets spouting o'er my lace.

'Tis always sunrise when I go
 In visions vague, in fleeting dreams,
 From lands of pine and sparkling snow,
 To palm trees guarding lazy streams
 In Egypt, where I lived, I know.

Red grows the world. Through drowsy lids
 I see the Nile as sunrise flares
 Its banners—then, as memory bids,
 The stone face of the desert stares,
 And lo, the Sphinx! the Pyramids!



SARTORIAL SHEARS

PARKER—Did you buy that suit for all wool?

TUCKER—I did.

PARKER—Well, you got fleeced, old fellow.



SUPERFLUOUS EFFORT

THEL—There is a report out that you are engaged to Arthur.

EDITH—Well, do you want me to deny it?

“Oh, it doesn’t matter. I would not believe the report even if you should deny it.”



THE DEAR CREATURE

ANGEL of peace and promoter of strife!
 O woman whose love is a bubble!
 Thou makest us all of the trouble of life—
 And life, we may add, worth the trouble.

MALCOLM LEAL.



PRESERVING THE ELEGANCIES

MRS. STAIRS (*to her husband, when stout lady enters*)—Oh, poor thing!
 See how she pants and puffs!
 MR. STAIRS—Don’t say that, my dear. Say, see how she trousers and powders!

IN MY WIFE'S EYE

By John Regnault Ellyson

THE last time His Grace the Archbishop dined with us there occurred a somewhat unexpected and slightly sensational episode. At the close of the meal the maid-servant came in and said that a poor gentleman at the door asked for something to eat. Questioned good-humoredly by me as to why she spoke of him as a gentleman, she answered piquantly that he certainly looked like one. My wife, glad of an opportunity of showing His Grace how she usually treated the poor and of showing me how impertinent she considered my inquiry, ordered the servant to bring him in at once.

"I think," said I, after a little pause, "I think it is not well to have him served here."

"Oh, yes," my wife replied, softly, but decisively; "we will have him here, by all means."

The stranger, entering as I made my remark, lingered near the door. Reassured by my wife's words and a glance from her, he advanced a few steps further into the room.

He was a thin, tall person, indifferently dressed, but with a good presence and a curiously priestly air—an apparently diffident, mild-mannered man, with a long, melancholy face and a downward cast of the eye.

He had nothing to say, but he seemed touched by the attention accorded him. My wife motioned him to the empty chair. He folded the cap he held, slipped it into his pocket and then sat down at the table, crossing himself and bowing his head for a moment.

This action especially, and the well-bred manner in which he ate, very

favorably impressed His Grace and my wife and rather puzzled me. All of us remained seated and conversation was continued, an occasional question being put to the stranger and eliciting a distinct but low-voiced reply. When he had finished the meal he again made the sign of the cross and bowed his head for somewhat less than a moment. He looked up then, and turning to my wife, said:

"Madam, in spite of your father's remarks—" he pointed toward me, but my wife was so pleased that she did not correct him, and His Grace was so seriously amused that he could not—"in spite of your father's remarks, you have been extremely kind, and I don't know how to thank you sufficiently. Perhaps, if you'll pardon me, I may take courage and relate an interesting event of my life, and thus in part repay you for your courtesies."

"Indeed, we shall only too gladly listen," said my wife.

"Well, then," resumed the stranger, speaking slowly and clearly, but in sad, soft tones now and again quivering with stifled emotion, "doubtless you've observed, though too gracious to comment on the fact, that at certain intervals I hold my breath for a moment and make the sign of the holy cross. If you will allow me to interrupt myself in such a way every five minutes, I will promise to tell some things that are truly amazing. It would pain me very much if you didn't understand me fully; I must say, therefore, that this interruption is a form of penance I imposed on myself two long years ago, immediately after my deliver-

ance, and while I hold my breath and make the sign of the cross, I'm offering up my soul in prayer.

"It would deeply pain me, too, if you should conceive the wrong impression of me. Possibly, from my tone and air, you have taken me for an unfrocked but repentant priest—Ah, so you confess as much! Believe me, however, I'm nothing of the kind. No; until the fateful change came in my career—until the beginning of the last two years—I was a merchant in Chester, England. If ever you should go there and question the people concerning me they would reply by stating that I came of a very devout family, that I have always deported myself like an honest man, and that I am now traveling about in the world on an unknown mission. Many other things they would no doubt tell you, but on these three points they would all agree. You seem astonished already. But, my distinguished friends, do reserve your astonishment; you will, in all candor, have need of it before I'm done.

"At the time I speak of there lived in the house adjoining mine a certain Dr. Zwatch. He had lived there for ten years and had secured a large practice. We were intimate friends; indeed, rather too intimate. The doctor, coming from Russia, had brought a long, peculiar history with him and a long, curious name. The name on his sign was a contraction of the original one. He frequently repeated the alien form, but nobody could ever repeat, much less remember it. Decidedly it was a wise change he made in that particular.

"This man, a profound scholar, was a most fascinating companion. He had magnetism of manner, perfect command of English, and ideas on all subjects. I have heard that he spoke twelve languages. The East he knew like a book, and he could picture any hero of its past or any incident of its history like an artist. He knew everything and took interest in everything. He reveled in science. Perpetually experimenting, every now and then by the mere skin of his teeth

he just escaped being blown into ribbons. You can't imagine how thrillingly he narrated these experiments and perils. They excelled romance. They charmed me. They gave rise to an admiration for him that was absolutely unbounded. His audacity grew to be a source of rare delight, his versatility amazed me, and so I fell completely under his influence—I became hopelessly infatuated.

"One day he opened up an astonishing proposition. . . . But excuse me for a moment."

The stranger lowered his head, made the sign of the cross, remained silent for about thirty seconds, and then resumed:

"Yes, the doctor suggested that I should take part in such an experiment as no one could have conceived of but this uncommonly remarkable man.

"'You almost make me leap out of my skin, doctor,' said I, attempting to smile, 'but it's absurd, of course—impracticable.'

"'On the contrary,' said he, 'I assure you it is very easily accomplished.' The trouble is that I mentioned it, perhaps, in too off-handed a manner."

"And at once he went on in his finest vein, describing the process minutely and with skill. No detail was omitted and no flaw was perceptible. In truth, nothing at first so incredible was ever rendered more plausible. In half an hour's time I entertained no doubts at all; I was as confident of success as the doctor himself. His persuasive tongue, his superhuman ingenuity counted for much, but it was the altogether bewildering novelty of his project that effectually captivated my fancy.

"You note that I proceed with more discretion in this matter than the doctor did. He fired his proposition at my head like an electric bolt. I have gradually prepared your mind for the reception of the new idea. Briefly, then, he proposed to drop me into my wife's eye as a bee drops into the bell of a flower!

"Now I don't remember having heard it mentioned by anybody, but

you will scarcely deny that a man for years may live, as I had lived, in closest companionship with a beautiful wife and yet never for an instant get at any conception or emotion of hers she doesn't choose to reveal. If you know the nature of man you know that this puzzles, if it does not torture him, because he is so unlike the woman in this respect—he being non-secrective, naturally outspoken, naturally frank, even in his villainies. Perhaps St. Jerome was thinking of the same thing when he wrote that 'for one idea that women lay bare there are a thousand and one undisclosed, treasured in secret and veiled forever.'

While the stranger, silent for a moment, leaned forward and wet his lips at the rim of his glass, the Archbishop looked very perplexed, and my wife, who had suddenly assumed a great rigidity of pose, darted an ominous glance at the unknown, on whom I, in my turn, bestowed the warmest of mute benedictions.

"I do not recall the words as being those of St. Jerome," said the Archbishop, gravely.

"They are his, nevertheless," said the stranger, in his earnest, quiet way; "but it matters not. The fact is, I was only about to say that the state of affairs to which I have alluded will not exist after the publication of my researches.

"The eye mirrors the mind—the eye reveals both conceptions and emotions; yet, viewed as you view the eye, nothing but the broadest conceptions and passions are visible. Every thought conceived by the brain, every fluctuation of emotional nature, is painted there, but the tints and shadows are so curious in character and so slight that they must be viewed, not from the outside but from the inside, and under exceptional conditions—"

The stranger stopped suddenly, swept his fingers over his brow in a peculiar way, and looked around as if he had lost his bearings. I had come to the conclusion already that the "poor gentleman" was mildly insane,

but his story was so delicious that I should have been heartily grieved if he had collapsed in the midst of it. I was delighted, therefore, when he resumed, though he had evidently forgotten where he had left off.

"Some moments ago I corrected an impression about myself," said he, "and now I ask you not to take up a wrong notion of my wife. She was certainly a study. She was beautiful, engaging, full of fine sentiments that fell from her lips on all occasions. She knew society as Dr. Zwatch knew the world. She was always smiling, always obliging, serene and charming. The impression she produced on me she produced on others. I was flattered by the flatteries she received. She was superb—with graceful outlines, the complexion of the pale rose, adorable dark hair, a dimpled chin, most delicate brows. But what would have eclipsed any features but hers were her eyes—no woman ever had eyes that were darker, more eloquent, more brilliant or more alluring. Excuse me."

The stranger paused now again, bent down his head, crossed himself, and after remaining absorbed for half a moment continued his remarks in the same exceedingly quiet tones:

"And you see before you the man who got into one of those beautiful eyes, and who will try now to explain how he went in and how he came out.

"One morning I beguiled my wife into paying a visit to the doctor in his laboratory, where, as I told her, he promised to amuse us with some evidences of his skill. But my wife no sooner entered than the ingenious doctor presented her with a choice bouquet that exhaled an exquisite fragrance. She freely imbibed the odor and immediately swooned. We caught her before she fell and laid her carefully, and at ease, on a sort of low divan. She looked very pale, but very beautiful, and on her lips lingered the smile of a divinity.

"I stood charmed at her side for a long while. In those moments I

adored my wife more than ever—I recalled my first glimpses of her, the scenes of our earliest meetings, our confessions of love, our nuptials and the many charms of our subsequent life. I was deep in this dream when the voice of the doctor roused me.

“‘Quick, now!’ said he, imperiously, seizing my arm and leading me to one end of the apartment, in which there was a circular pavilion of long dark-gray curtains.

“‘Shake off these clothes!’ said he, and in some measure he aided me in disrobing. With the removal of each article I grew colder; I had not before noticed the temperature. Had it suddenly fallen several degrees, or had—?

“I thought I should surely freeze. As I got out of my last garment I shivered terribly. I seized a buffalo robe lying on the floor. I was in the act of wrapping myself when the doctor lifted one of the curtains of the circular pavilion and showed me an enormous copper caldron filled with a greenish fluid that smoked and boiled over the red coals of a vast iron brazier.

“I had no further need of the buffalo robe, though the temperature had not, I believe, materially changed. That sight was enough. I was suffused with suffocating warmth; perspiration burst from every pore; I panted for outside air. Turning toward the doctor, I fell on my knees in front of him and dumbly held up my hands.

“The doctor, for an instant touched with the pathos of the situation, leaned over me and helped me upon my feet, but then he said, petulantly:

“‘Come, this is not a matter of posing; we must conduct things scientifically, not dramatically! This way—I will assist you—one, two, and now again. Ah, considering, you are remarkably firm—one step more. Don’t brood—it’s better to observe. See how the green surface is broken by many-colored bubbles, and how the foam irradiates and curls round the edges. There!’ cried he, and at the same time I felt a pressure from behind.

“It was the touch of the doctor’s hand, treacherous and vigorous. For a moment I stood, or rather tottered, on the verge of this pool of unknown liquor, and then I sank forward with a thousand terrible noises ringing in my ears.

“I can’t say just what first occurred. But I soon had extremely curious sensations. I breathed freely and pleasurabley; a pungent odor rose in my nostrils; the liquor caressed my limbs like a magical balm. I was agreeably bewildered with a confusion of seductive thoughts—wave after wave of poetical imagery—a sort of rhythmic rising and falling of everything. Drowsiness slowly followed, and a failing away—I do not know exactly how to describe it. I lost the sense of limit or bounds—the sense of palpable reality. I seemed to dream and slip back into another dream, and back again still further into the new fold of a new dream, and so on infinitely; then, after a long, long period the process seemed reversed, and I gradually woke, but only to find myself still dreaming and waking again, and yet still dreaming, and so on until at last I found myself only too wide awake and too well conscious of my changed condition.

“All things about me appeared to have increased in proportions. I saw the shaggy, demoniac face of Dr. Zwatch hanging over me. I lay at the end of a delicate steel blade in the hands of the doctor—I, preposterously dwindled in person, no more than an inch in height and no more than a needle’s thickness in girth. Standing near the couch on which my wife reclined in a dull stupor, the doctor, with a glass in his eye, gleamed over me, handling me with considerable gentleness and great skill, and then all at once I felt myself falling, and found myself immediately in the interior of my wife’s eye.”

The stranger now paused again, performed his little devotional gesture, then rested his elbow on the table and his brow on the edge of his palm for thirty seconds or more. When

he lifted his face tears were dripping from his lashes to his cheeks.

"Pardon me," said he, plaintively; "I had promised myself to be calm. But ah, it is not always possible to be calm. After one has passed through Gehenna one's wounds are apt to open afresh at any time.

"For forty-eight hours I remained in my wife's eye, and the discoveries I made therein I am going to publish in a book some day—I mean those of a purely scientific character, for I shall never be tempted to record those of a strictly personal nature, partly in the interest of humanity and partly in the interest of morality.

"I say I remained in my wife's eye for forty-eight hours, and I escaped by the rarest chance while she at noon was doing up her hair in front of her dressing-case. I had worked myself out of her eye into the corner of her lid, and in a moment she wiped me away like a gnat. I fell, luckily, into a pot of cold cream—an incident the doctor had not calculated on, and a happy one for me, for my person absorbed the cream and at once began to develop. I kept myself secreted in the jar until my wife left the room, and then, looking cautiously around, I descended to the floor by the lace trappings of the bureau. What I learned in the jar of cold cream I turned to use. My wife had a habit of bathing in milk—a luxurious habit—and I found the bath still unemptied. I plunged in, and the process of absorption began again—a pleasurable process that put me to sleep—and when I woke I rang for the servant. It was only after several days and one hundred and twenty milk baths that I acquired my natural proportions. But in the meanwhile I made some inquiries, and learned that on the day of my deliverance my wife had set out for the Continent with my too intimate and too ingenuous friend, the doctor.

"My mission in life," said the stranger, rising, "is the search for my friend. I understand that he came over here last Spring, and that he is somewhere in this State, and I hope

to have a consultation with him—at six paces in some remote and secluded spot.

"Now let me thank you once more for your excellent fare, and thank you sincerely for the attention you have given me," added the stranger, and thereupon he bowed and took leave.

During the whole scene the Archbishop maintained his apostolic decorum, and considering the provoking circumstances, my wife behaved cleverly, but the look she gave the "poor gentleman" as he passed out of the door was the look the Caliph Vathek gave when he sought to do execution on some one of his favored subjects.

At the Academy, behind the scenes, that night I recognized at once our afternoon visitor when Bramble introduced the English comedian, Mr. Manning, billed there for his first appearance in his farcical drama, entitled "Designs and Blinds," and I must confess, though I liked the interlude at my house better than the evening drama, I was charmed, nevertheless, on both occasions with the talents of the man—his dry humor, his vivacious quietude and his inimitable grimaces.

The bold idea of bearding my lady in the presence of His Grace originated with Bramble. Entirely unknown to me—for otherwise I am not sure how I should have passed the ordeal—Bramble had persuaded his friend to enact the comedy I have described, and he had at the same time assumed all risks.

Of course, I paid for the supper after the play. And one of the memorable ones it was! Manning stood the test well, and I held my own, for a wonder. But Bramble!—I never saw him so doubled up; he had to be carried home like a bundle of old clothes. Jonquil, always famous in leading an attack, suffered a slight stroke of paralysis for the fourth time within the year, and yet I do not, by any means, altogether despair of him, since I am so confident that none of us, except "my widow," will ever survive the redoubtable General.

RONDEAU

IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYĀM

SEEK Him of Naishapur, ye sad at heart,
 And ye who wander through the throbbing mart
 Of Life, and find not what ye seek, nor know
 That, glancing high, ye see it not below,
 And dreaming of the Whole, Ye miss the Part.

And Ye who bare your Breast before the Dart
 Of Love, and wooing Kisses, reap the Smart
 Of jealousy—smile through your tears and go
 Seek Him of Naishapur.

Ah, Sweet! I prithee, be not sad: nay, start
 With Hope a-nestling in thy Soul; with Art
 Thou *mayest* wear the Rose, and others sow,
 Until thy Life a very Garden grow;
 But, if it wither, and thy Joy depart,
 Seek Him of Naishapur!

RICHARD B. GLAENZER.



HEARTILY APPROVED

SUDDENRICH—What do you think of a college education for a young man?
FRIEND—What do you think of making of your son?
 “Oh, nothing in particular.”
 “Just the thing.”



PERFECTION

THIS is the perfect day—nor sun, nor blue,
 Nor breeze, nor green has aught therewith to do;
 A glance, a smile, a word, and all is right;
 For oh, my love, my day is only You.

EDWIN L. SABIN.

DOROTHEA, PHILANTHROPIST

By Stewart Edward White

I HAD conceived a huge joke wherewith to amuse Dorothea, so I entered briskly, unannounced, without greeting. From the depths of my ulster pocket I produced in a most business-like way a small alarm clock, which I placed on the table. Then I took off my coat and flung it over a chair. Dorothea remained silent, a curled-up fluff of white on the hearth rug. I judged she was paralyzed with astonishment.

"I have made five calls this evening," I remarked, importantly, "all through the efficient aid of that alarm clock. Before going into a place I set it for ten minutes ahead. When it goes off, I sit calm and unmoved until the last stroke of the bell. Then I get up and go. It worked all right except once, when I struck a house where they had an alarm bell that went off when the furnace was about to explode. There was a bit of excitement there."

And then I stopped, bewildered, for I had come entirely to the end of my joke some ten minutes ahead of schedule time. Casting about for the reason, I discovered it in the lack of Dorothea's interruptions. Then I looked at Dorothea.

"What's the matter?" I inquired, solicitously.

The doleful little figure stirred.

"I've made a fool of myself," it said, mournfully.

"Have any help from anyone?" I asked.

Not a gleam of indignation. I grew alarmed at last.

"Tell me about it," I begged, with real sympathy.

Dorothea pulled single hairs from

the rug and cast them on the fire. After a bit it became evident why the ancients sacrificed in the open air. Dorothea elevated her small nose and sat on her feet in the big arm-chair.

"I've been good to someone," said she at last.

"And the shock of an unwonted action has disturbed you?" I suggested.

"Out of pure kindness of heart," went on Dorothea, unmoved.

"Tell me about it," I cried, with new enthusiasm.

"You know Teddy Davis?"

"Yes."

"Well then, you know how young he is—a mere child."

"Six months older than you."

Dorothea would not even counter.

"And he has been coming to me for advice. He is so young, and he hadn't the first idea of what girls like, and he was so much in love with that little Reynolds thing, and he is such a nice boy. Don't you see?"

"Quite," said I, gravely.

"He used to get into frightful scrapes with her, and I'd tell him how to get out of them."

"Having had more experience," said I—merely by way of comment.

"He was awfully grateful for it, and he was so nice about it that after a while I began to tell him a little of what to say when he wasn't in a scrape. You see, I, being a girl, could know better what girls like."

"Sort of *Cyrano* and *Christian*," I interpolated; "the 'I-your-soul, you-my-beauty' act, eh?"

"That's it. Only after a while I got

too interested in just *saying* things. I didn't think whether girls would like them or not—just whether they were bright or not. That's where I lost."

"Penalty of being clever," I remarked, sententiously.

"Then I am clever?" snapped in Dorothea, eagerly.

"In this world the punishment does not always fit the crime. The remark was general," said I.

Dorothea sank back.

"The things I told him were good, anyway," she continued, after a moment. "For instance, 'Now,' said I, 'when she accuses you of jollying, you must say, 'Ah, but you jolly with your eyes!' When she accuses you of being a mere boy, you must say, 'I have only lived since meeting you.' When she accuses you of being cruel, you must say, 'How could I be aught but heartless after seeing you?' When she comes into the room some time, you must be slangy and say, 'Sit down and make yourself homely'; and then when she looks doubtful, you must add, 'for heaven has not done it for you.' And—"

I broke in at this point with great indignation.

"Dorothea," said I, severely, "of all the sentimental, cheap-novel silliness, that is the worst!"

"Do you think so?" she asked, anxiously. "But anyway," she went on, somewhat comforted, "I told him what to say when she informed him

that if she let him do that he would have no respect for her."

"What is it, Dorothea, what is it?" I cried, thoroughly aroused.

"Don't you wish you knew!" said Dorothea, provokingly. The joy of recital, than which Dorothea knows none greater, was bringing back her good humor.

"Then came the Barclay dance. I had told Ted lots of new things to say, and I felt interested, so when I saw them go into the conservatory I slipped in after them and hid. I knew all about it, anyway," said Dorothea, deprecatingly, "and I just wanted to see how it worked. Ted was always so vague."

"I mind me," quoth I, in a musing tone, "of an ancient proverb or wise saw concerning eavesdroppers and what they hear."

"Don't be horrid!" Her voice became tearful again. "What do you suppose? The first thing I heard was that little Reynolds thing asking, 'Well, Ted dear, what did she spring on you this time?'—slangy little cat!—and then Ted told her everything I had told him, and they just had fits over it."

Dorothea was getting very doleful again. She looked on my augmenting symptoms.

"If you laugh," she asserted, solemnly, "I shall scream!"

But she did not scream. She merely hit me an indefinite number of times with a sofa pillow.



WHAT IS LOVE?

"O H, let me, dearest maid," he cries,
"My fond affection prove;
Pray answer now, without disguise,
And tell me what is love."

The maiden pauses, and pretends
The theme to weigh and quiz;
And then replies: "It all depends
On what your income is!"

THE ROSE OF HEART'S DELIGHT

By Justus Miles Forman

MR. GERALD LIVINGSTON sat on the *terrasse* of the Café du Panthéon and swore, wickedly and with point. Jimmie Rogers, across the little marble-topped table, screwed about in his chair and looked vaguely apologetic.

"I don't see how I'm to blame," he said, plaintively, "because my sister wants to come over and play. I can't stop Jessica. You know well enough I'd rather go to Concarneau with you than to Scotland with her, but hang it! I'm simply out of the running for the Summer, that's all there is of it."

"When are you leaving Paris?" growled Livingston.

"To-morrow evening, night boat Calais-Dover. I'll run up from London to Liverpool next day and meet the *Lucania*."

"Sweet mess you leave me in!" said Livingston, resentfully. "What in Gehenna am I going to do? I spent an hour last night down at the club trying to get Simmy Simmons to go to Concarneau with me. I even lowered myself to a compromise on St.-Malo or Dinard, but he's making little wax horses up in the Campagne Première stables—they tie a piebald Arab out in the courtyard for him every day—and you couldn't get him away with a rope. I've a jolly good notion to cut up to Scheveningen and get some bathing. It's always interesting there, interestingly indecent."

"Why don't you go somewhere near?" suggested Jimmie. "Your governor may turn up any day, you know. He's in Naples."

"Yes—bless him!" agreed Livingston. "He's pottering about Pompeii

under a pith helmet and a green umbrella, squandering the money that he might save and will to me on spurious little statuettes elaborately mutilated as to noses and arms. I could take him to the shop where they're made. As for the places near here, I'm sick of them. I won't go to Barbison and I won't go to Fontainebleau, and I hate Crécy. Crécy and Czerny la Ville are overrun with things in limp skirts and spectacles, who sit under umbrellas and paint sheep and poplar trees. I ran into a drove of these budding geniuses once two years ago at Czerny. They were working under a silly little ass of an American who wore his hair down over his eyes and pretended he was French. He'd once studied under Chase in America, and while he couldn't paint well enough to whitewash a fence, he had all manner of foolish little tricks and mannerisms—stolen from Chase. He painted with brushes about three feet long, and he'd make a little dab at arm's length, then run back about a rod and squint. He had a beautiful, studied pose for that squint. Then he'd spring at the canvas, hit it cruelly with a brush and go back and pose again. It was sickening. But every one of those admiring females tried to imitate him. You'd have died to see a whole line of them on a hill of an afternoon, painting poplar trees and dashing to and fro viciously with brushes like mahlsticks, for all the world like a fencing school. It turned me daffy in a day, and I came away."

Jimmie Rogers laughed. "The fools ye have always with you," he observed. "You might go to Grez."

"What's Grez?" demanded Livingston. "Never heard of it."

"Grez-sur-Loing, other side of the forest. Dead little white plaster town. Three people, a cow and two jackasses. Funny old white plaster hotel. Pretty river, though."

Livingston clinked a franc on the table and rose, yawning. "Doesn't sound exciting, very," he criticised. "Think I'll go to Scheveningen. Give Jessica my love and be good. See you in September."

Then he strolled up the Boul' Miche' and looked in for a half-hour at that very improper resort for the ribald known as Bullier's.

The next day he spent ten minutes over an *Indicateur Chaix*, after which he put a steamer box and a suit-case into a *fiacre*, and taking his bicycle over his lap, drove to the Gare de Lyon.

A curious and singularly unsafe looking omnibus rolled and swayed and wobbled over the two kilometers between the country railway station and the village of Grez. Livingston wagered countless louis with an imaginary second self that the ark would seize on the first turning as an Ararat.

Nothing so disastrous happened, however. The ark left the poplar-bordered highroad, dived into a hollow of the plain, and a little wooden sign hanging precariously from the yellowed wall said, "Grez s. L. Nemours 5 kilomètres."

Livingston perceived at once two of the three people whom Jimmie Rogers had described as constituting the human element of the populace; also the cow, also one of the jackasses. The other could be heard. Though distant he was not lost. Indeed, the town seemed to be growing. A yellow dog with three and a half legs came out and sniffed at the ark. He had a sort of triumphant air. Three of his supports were firm. None of the ark's was.

There stood at the door of the Hôtel Chevillon, smiling cavernously, a sprightly young thing of five-and-sixty, in red head-kerchief and meal-

bag waist and skirt tied none too securely.

At dusk he was served his dinner out in the queer little rustic loge built of boughs and gnarled roots, open on all sides, and just large enough to hold the round table. He was waited on by a big-eyed, red-cheeked country maid and two cats. The cats' part was to get under the girl's feet or to reach timid, suppliant paws to the knees of the young American. The girl brought Livingston's coffee and spanked the cat, not very severely.

The man laughed. "*Très mignons, les chats, hein?*" he suggested.

The girl bobbed, and Livingston gave her a louis. It appeared to produce temporary heart failure.

After his coffee he lighted a pipe and lounged out into the street. It was quite dark by now, and Grez was at dinner or going to bed.

Through lighted windows came the clink of dishes and bursts of household chatter, with now and then, by way of the spice of life, a howl from chastised infancy.

Livingston felt, all at once, curiously alien and lonely and out of it. "They're all at home, curse 'em!" he said, morosely. "Sordid beggars, if you like, but it's—it's home." It was a long time since Livingston had known anything like a home. "If I'd stopped in town, now," he growled, "I'd be sitting at the Ambassadeur's or the Jardin de Paris drinking something cold and watching all the pretty American girls with their poppers and their mommers. And if I'd gone to Scheveningen I'd be hearing the band play in the Kur-saal and hobnobbing with Altessem. My dear boy, you're an ass! a silly ass!"

An hour later he was nestling his head in the pillows. "If something doesn't turn up to-morrow," he muttered, "back I go to civilization."

He woke in the morning suddenly, and with a sense of disaster. The air shivered with a strange clamor. Then he smiled. Two of the inhabitants of Grez were braying as if their

hearts or lungs would burst, and from the hotel garden a peacock screamed uncannily. "Oh, that will do for a rising bell!" said Livingston.

He dressed and wandered down through the lonely garden toward the river on which it bordered. "*Grand jardin bosquet bordant la rivière*," said the hotel correspondence paper.

The garden was full of geraniums and mignonette and little spice pinks and single roses. Over in a corner stood a group of tall hollyhocks. Something grew tight in the man's throat, and a little pain came into his heart. His mind went back with a jump to New Haven and his four years under the big white Y on the blue flag, and to Her. In Her garden there were hollyhocks, over by the fence in a corner, as here.

"Damn!" said Livingston, and began to whistle. "I'll go up to Paris this noon," he declared. Then he went down under the little grove of gnarled lindens to the bank of the river, where the *bateaux de pêche et de promenade* were moored, and his heart stood still again.

"No, I won't," he exclaimed, inwardly, with great decision. "Oh, my Lord! what a beauty! what an unthinkable, unbelievable beauty!" Then added aloud, in a state of confusion bordering on paralysis: "Oh—er—good-morning—er. Beautiful day, isn't it?"

"Comment, monsieur?" asked the girl, looking up. "Bonjour, monsieur," she added, with a little, oh, a very little smile at the corner of her lips.

"You're a rose," said Livingston in his soul, "a deep, deep pink rose, born in a queen's garden. You're all the beautiful, indescribable things that ever came into men's dreams and died on the waking—all of them put together. Oh, the gods must have been happy when you were born!" And then aloud: "Mille pardons, made-moi—er—madame."

The smile at the corners of the maddening lips became a shade less ghost-like, and something flickered in two big cornflower eyes.

"They're too big," complained Livingston to his soul. "It's uncanny to have such big eyes. I'd go clear off my head if I should look at them for ten seconds."

"Alas, this chain!" sighed the vision.

Livingston wondered when he could have heard such a golden voice before, and decided that it must have been in church during the *Sanctus*. He made a mental vow to attend divine worship more faithfully hereafter.

"This chain! It has made of itself a hopeless tangle." The eyes looked tragic distress.

Livingston forced his legs and tongue from paralysis. "If I might be permitted, mademoiselle," he begged, and knelt by the little post where the boat's painter was made fast.

The chain was not in the least tangled or tied. It was merely wrapped twice about the post. A babe might have freed it. For an instant an unworthy suspicion flickered through the mind of Mr. Livingston. He turned his head. A hand hung at the level of his eyes, long, slim, white, blue veined, pink palmed as a Bouguereau nymph's. His blood rose and sang.

"If I dared kiss that," he said fiercely to his soul, "I would gladly roll off this bank and drown. My life would have been well spent."

The girl sprang into the boat. He was annoyed. He had hoped to assist her.

He fetched oars—such clumsy things for those slim hands! The girl dipped them pensively and looked up. The boat was a yard from shore.

"That chain—" she murmured.

"Heaven bless the chain!" murmured Livingston, with fervor.

"—was most difficult. Monsieur is clever—at chains."

"I hope, mademoiselle, that I shall never meet with anything more difficult. I know that I shall never meet with anything more agreeable."

The girl smiled and rowed away. In the middle of the tiny stream she pulled a water lily and sniffed it.

"For a so polite little speech," she said, her face buried in the lily, "monsieur deserves more than—chains." She placed the lily ostentatiously on the stern seat of the boat, and regarding it with care, pulled through the arch of the stone bridge, while Livingston held his breath.

The sprightly creature who had welcomed his advent the day before—inquiry revealed that it was old Madame Chevillon who owned the hotel—came and chattered with him over his breakfast.

Monsieur intended to stay some days? Livingston flourished a *croissant* and beamed on her largely. Monsieur had every intention of staying for weeks—months—probably forever, he answered her.

Madame Chevillon seemed alarmed and retreated in a speedy waddle to the scullery, where she held excited communion with the red-cheeked maid, and the two stared in turns at the mad Englishman through the little window.

Livingston was meditating. "She went away in one of the hotel boats," he answered. "It is not to be supposed that she will burn or sink that boat for the sake of walking home. *Ergo*, she will return as she went. That river bank struck me as rather a good place to sit and read. I might even make foolish little sketches."

He found "The Seven Seas" in his bag, and hastened with it to the river. The boat was still absent. "Here I stay," he said, with decision, "if it takes a month," and opened the book. It took about an hour.

At the sound of gentle splashing he raised his head, and was conscious of a strong internal disturbance beneath his left ribs. A syringa bush partially screened him, and he waited behind it while the boat drifted toward the stake, but as the prow touched land he caught and held it.

The girl's back had of course been toward him, but as she stood up in the swaying boat and turned, she saw him and gave a little scream; immediately afterward she sat down with some decision.

"I'm sorry," said Livingston, meekly. "I held it as steady as I could."

"I hadn't seen you," said the girl. "You—you frightened me."

Livingston sighed. "I know I'm not handsome," he admitted.

He was rewarded by a momentary vision of very white, even and shining teeth. "Are you trying to make me say that you are beautiful?" she asked. "I shall disappoint you. I shall say that you are a perfect hobgoblin."

"I am crushed," asseverated Livingston. "Do you want to do anything else to me, or will you get out now? I intend holding the boat very still this time."

The girl rose, balancing herself like a rope dancer. Then she looked at the chain. "Perhaps," she suggested, "perhaps you would give me your hand."

Livingston saved himself as by a miracle from falling into the water. Then both of the slim, cool hands were in his for an instant, with the quick pressure of her weight, and she was beside him on the bank.

The face of each was scarlet. Livingston made fast the boat while the girl rescued her bunch of flowers. "Aren't they beautiful?" she murmured.

Livingston looked into her eyes. "Larkspur, that's it!" he cried triumphantly to his soul. "They're the color of larkspurs! I—I believe they are the most beautiful things I ever saw," he answered.

The crimson spread back to the little ears. "But you aren't looking at them!" she cried.

"I have but one pair of eyes," complained the American.

"It appears," observed the girl, with dignity, "that monsieur is clever at other things than—chains." And she moved toward the little gate in the wall which gave on the neighboring garden.

"Oh, dear!" said she, at the gate, "I have dropped a flower. However," very carelessly, "it is of no consequence whatever."

Livingston fastened the flower in

his buttonhole. "Politeness doesn't demand that I agree with all your opinions," he said.

Up at the hotel he maneuvered Madame Chevillon into a corner and demanded information. "Monsieur doubtless speaks of Mademoiselle St. Roques," decided this lady. "Qui est Mademoiselle St. Roques? Personne ne sait pas. What would you? On dit qu'elle chante dans un café à Paris."

"Sings in a café!" cried Livingston. "Never!"

"Comment?" begged Madame Chevillon. "Every Summer, since three, four years, she has lived with the good Mère Piot, next door to the hotel—*mademoiselle et sa tante, une vieille dame très gentille*. Monsieur has seen the aunt? Yes? Mademoiselle has permission to use the hotel boats. What would you? There is no one else to use them. She commonly makes her promenade *en bateau* in the morning."

"Sings in a café in Paris!" said Livingston again. "That girl? Nonsense!"

The next morning he was down in the garden before the asses and the peacocks had finished their matins.

A vision in pink muslin sprigged with little roses knelt at the landing stage. "This chain!" it murmured, in distress.

"Heaven bless the chain!" said Livingston, with fervor.

The vision indulged in a faint smile. Livingston's heart sprang to the top of his throat and turned somersaults there.

"It is a beautiful morning," he observed, between somersaults.

"I strained my wrist yesterday," said the vision, irrelevantly, "rowing that boat. The boat is very heavy."

Livingston advanced with the light of decision in his eye. "There is but one thing to be done," he said, firmly. "I cannot permit you to miss your morning promenade. You must be rowed, since you cannot row yourself."

He began to unfasten the painter.

The vision looked at him with big round eyes. "Monsieur is *very amiable*," innocently, "but I really was—was not thinking of rowing this morning. I only came over to look at the boat."

Then the vision sauntered pensively toward the gate in the wall. A close observer might have detected a glint not altogether childlike in the blue eyes.

Livingston stood with his mouth open. "Well, I'll be—" he began, and failed. "I'll be—the little fiend!"

The next morning he was down as early as before. The vision was there again, in pink muslin sprigged with little flowers, and carrying three deep pink roses still wet with dew.

"This—" began the vision, sweetly.

"Heaven bless it!" declared Livingston, impulsively.

"I was not about to speak of the chain," was the answer, in a sudden access of dignity, but with lips not quite under control.

"May I venture to beg," said the man, very humbly, "that as mademoiselle's wrist is incapacitated, I may have the honor, the unspeakable honor, of rowing mademoiselle along the course of this very attractive stream?"

The vision seemed startled.

"Madame, my aunt, would die of horror," she asserted.

"Madame is in the habit of rising early?" inquired the tempter.

"Oh, no," hurriedly; "madame will not be up for—for an hour yet."

"In that case," declared Livingston, in triumph, "we might row—for an hour—without in the least risking the life of madame, your aunt."

The vision laughed, and protested. "I am certain that your reasoning has a moral flaw somewhere."

"Reason," said Livingston, as he pulled under the low, sounding arch of the stone bridge, "and morals, as you should have been taught earlier in life, have nothing whatever to do with each other. I show you by perfectly sound logic that our taking advantage of a gorgeously beautiful morning can in no way endanger the

life of madame, your aunt, who lies sleeping yonder, and you immediately assail my morals. You have no more sense of logic than——”

“Than what?” demanded the girl.

“Than any other woman.”

Dew lay on the grass of the stream's bank. Dew lay beaded on the rushes and lily pads. The unutterable freshness and fragrance of a Summer morning, with all nature washed clean overnight, filled the air, and there was the glad sense of running water, of green things growing, of gardens and of mating birds.

Livingston threw out his arms and sniffed with delight. The girl's eyes sparkled. “Isn't it wonderful?” she cried; “isn't it glorious?” His eyes answered her. “Now, if you were alone,” she continued with scorn—he made a gesture of abhorrence—“you would spoil it all with tobacco smoke.” He looked guilty. “But if you think you are going to be allowed to do so while I am here you are mistaken. It sha'n't be spoiled.” A fish leaped near the boat, its fins glistening in the sunlight. “What do you do here in our little Grez, monsieur?” she asked. “So few come here.”

“I wait for the early morning to arrive,” he replied, sighing. “Alas, the days are very long.”

The girl's lips twitched and he had a moment's glimpse of larkspur eyes. “*Mais sérieusement!* to sketch, to paint?”

“Well,” he admitted, “I had some small thought of sketching when I came. It's out of my line, though—trees and things.”

“Your line? But what is your *metier*, then?”

“Girls,” said Livingston.

“Oh,” responded the vision, coldly.

“I—that is—oh, you know, I mean—oh, damn!”

The vision appeared much shocked. There was no mistaking the tone of Livingston's last remark.

“How do you know, monsieur,” she demanded, “that I do not understand English?”

“Oh, I say!” gasped the man. “Of course you don't, though,” he

continued, more comfortably. “But about the girls, you know, I want to explain. You see, my line is making drawings of good-looking women in smart clothes; men, too, of course, to some extent; sketchy, unfinished, *chic* sort of things. The magazines of my native soil demand such libels on art. It is believed that I do them well. I don't, really.”

“Oh!” breathed the vision, delightedly. “Will you make a sketch of me? Not that I—I don't mean that I'm—I'm—well, worth drawing, you know, but I want to see you do it. Please!”

Livingston dropped his oars and looked at her with dismay. “Draw you!” he gasped. “You! *Merci, non! Jamais de la vie!* I've given up trying to gild the gates of heaven or paint fire into an opal. *Merci, non!*”

The girl wrinkled a small nose. “That is rather pretty,” she admitted. “Still, I should have liked to be drawn.” She trailed a hand in the water and lifted it, dripping. It flashed a shower of diamonds and pearls. “If you pull to the left of the little point of rushes, monsieur,” she said, “we shall come to where I gathered my flowers *avant-hier*.”

The boat brushed through a hedge of rushes that closed again high overhead, and floated lazily in a backwater, a nook shut in on all sides by waving green. The water was covered with strange little waxen blossoms, white petaled, yellow centred. The girl pulled an armful. “Are they not beautiful?” she murmured.

Livingston looked into the larkspur eyes, and the blood sang in his veins.

“I—I believe they are the most beautiful things I ever saw,” he answered.

The crimson spread back to the little ears. “But you aren't looking at them!” she said.

“I have but one pair of eyes,” complained the American.

The larkspur eyes were under cover. The bosom of the flower-sprigged muslin heaved.

“We must go back,” the girl faltered; “it grows late.”

Livingston's hand trembled on the oars. "Oh, you are the rose of heart's delight!" he cried, in a shaking whisper, and the boat broke through the wall of rushes.

The next morning there was no pink muslin at the boat landing, no larkspur eyes to hide themselves behind absurdly long black lashes.

Livingston raged along the river bank. "Suppose she should be ill!" his heart cried, dumbly. And a ready mind conjured visions of his angel stretched, pale and suffering, on her bed. For the first time in his life he counted every hour of the day as it dragged by.

The next day it rained. Livingston stopped drearily indoors and cursed himself—if the Recorder ever takes such things seriously—into a permanent billet in Gehenna.

The morning after, she was coming through the gate in the wall as Livingston reached the river's edge. He turned a reproachful face.

"It is you, monsieur!" she said, with great surprise.

"I," he agreed. "It is good of you to notice. What an eternity!" he sighed, somewhat obscurely.

"Two days?" queried the maid.

"Two months!" said the man, "each of thirty days, and every day of twenty-four hours. What do you know about the passage of time?"

The girl smiled, but she saw Livingston's face, and the smile somehow died.

"I have been reading to madame, my aunt," she said, presently, "the Essays of Monsieur Montaigne. Selected essays," she added, hastily, and turned pink.

Livingston laughed. They pulled up the river swiftly, breathing in the freshness of the morning, exquisite, aromatic, a blended essence of all delightful odors, pungent, almost, as a pain. The tall green rushes parted for them a moment, then swung to place and nodded in the little breeze. The girl pulled an armful of waxen flowers.

"Are they not beautiful?" she murmured.

"I believe they are the most—" began Livingston.

"That will do," interrupted the girl, and the larkspur eyes retreated behind the long lashes.

"You're not polite," complained the American.

The girl sniffed. Then she extracted a flower from the great cluster. "Would monsieur like one of—of the most beautiful things in the world?" she inquired. There was a slight suggestion of malice in the tone.

He looked at the black lashes. There was the swiftest flash of blue. "Monsieur would like two," he said.

The girl made a little exclamation of impatience. "Now you are becoming very tiresome," she declared; "and if you don't reform we shall have to go back at once." But she did not look wholly offended.

"These flowers," she said, presently, "must be arranged in a grand bouquet for madame my aunt. Monsieur shall see how clever I am *comme fleuriste*."

Then she set to work with the cluster of flowers, and as she worked she sang. She sang the great air out of "Samson et Dalila"—

"Réponds—réponds à ma tendresse!
Verse-moi—verse-moi l'ivresse!"

She sang in a little, low, hushed voice, just over her breath—a contralto voice, rich unspeakably, golden clear, with that strange, thrilling vibrato that every great voice has when its power is held in check. Livingston crooked his feet under the thwart and strained his hands on the gunwales. "For God's sake, don't make an ass of yourself now!" he cried savagely to his soul. "Look away somewhere. Say the multiplication table over backward. Count the cows in that meadow. *Don't make an ass of yourself!*"

The voice thrilled and quivered like the C string of a violin, like a 'cello dreaming of its German forests when the world was young.

"Do you suppose she realizes what she's singing?" said Livingston to his soul. "Do you suppose she does?"

In truth, it wasn't a fortunate selection.

The girl threw overboard a handful of dead leaves, sighed pensively and sang:

"Bonjour, Suzon, ma fleur des bois.

"Why don't you applaud my little concert?" she demanded, mockingly.

Livingston raised a sober face. "You make the very soul of a chap grow weak," he said, half-laughing. "You would make an angel forget himself!"

Quick tears sprang to the blue eyes. "Ah, non, non, non, mon ami!" she cried, and a little flush spread over her cheeks. "I—I'd trust you," she added, softly.

He gave a low, inarticulate exclamation and leaned toward her pleadingly. In a flash the larkspur eyes read his face and hid behind the "grand bouquet" of water flowers.

"Stop it!" cried Livingston's good angel. "Do you want to spoil everything?"

"It grows late," the girl faltered; "we must go back."

As they pulled homeward Livingston said, to break the silence that was becoming intolerable: "You have the most wonderful voice I have heard. You must have sung a great deal."

The girl gave him a glance of alarm. "What do you mean?" she said, swiftly. Then, after a moment, "Yes; I sing a great deal to madame, my aunt, and—to my friends."

She bent over the flowers, but her eyes were still troubled when the landing was made at the hotel garden. At the gate in the wall she paused an instant. "The other day," she began, critically regarding the flowers, "I called you a—hobgoblin." She opened the gate and passed through it. "You aren't a hobgoblin," she added, from the other side; "you're very good-looking." And she banged the gate.

The next morning she met him with a wholly irresponsible and apparently causeless giggle. Indeed, the hour of the morning's promenade *en bateau*

might safely be described as a prolonged giggle.

When the gate in the wall had finally closed, the American stood regarding it in a sort of trance. "Well, I'll be—" he began, and failed. "They say God is especially kind to fools. What an overwhelming, elemental tenderness He must feel toward the chap who thinks he knows anything about women!"

The morning after, he came down in a mask of tragedy. The Rose of Heart's Delight was there before him, all sweetness, all dainty seriousness, with a half-humorous depreciation of the mood of yesterday in her eyes.

"Monsieur is not well?" she demanded, regarding him anxiously. "It is a migraine? *mal aux dents?* Monsieur is *ennuyé* of Grez?"

"I didn't sleep," said Livingston, and pulled upstream. The tall reeds bent and nodded as they passed. He pulled a crumpled telegram from his pocket and threw it into the bottom of the boat. "I must go to Paris today," he said, looking over the fields. "My father is there. This came last night."

The girl drew a little sharp breath and caught her clasped hands to her breast swiftly. There was a long silence while the man stared out miserably over the green and yellow fields and the girl sat with round, wide eyes and paling cheeks.

A little fish sprang into the sunlight and landed most unexpectedly on a lily pad, where it flopped in panic, ludicrous in the face of heaven. A scent of thyme and rose gardens came down on a vagrant breeze, fragrant as memories of lost childhood, and overhead the tall, plumed reeds nodded always, swishing their green leaves and whispering together.

"Why, then—" said the girl, softly, and stopped, because her voice was not yet safe; "why, then—it's over, monsieur—our little promenades *en bateau*? our little matinées? I'm sorry, monsieur, but doubtless monsieur is quite ready to go back to Paris—*déjà ennuylé*." The voice quivered and ceased, and she tried to

laugh, but it was a pitiful little unsuccessful laugh.

Livingston raised a white, drawn face. "God ha' mercy," said he, "for I love you better than I love life or my worthless soul. There isn't an inch of me, body or spirit, that doesn't thrill and ache for you. I've loved you from the first moment I saw you by the river bank. When I die, and they ask me what I've done as an excuse for living, I shall boast that I've known you and worshipped you, and they'll say my life was well spent. Oh, you beauty—you unthinkable, unbelievable beauty! You're a rose," he whispered, "the Rose of Heart's Delight. You're all the beautiful, indescribable things that ever came into men's dreams and died on the waking—all of them put together! Oh, the gods must have been happy when you were born!"

Then for a long time there was silence. The girl sat in the stern with her hands over her face and sobbed shiveringly.

After a time he spoke again, gently. "Ah, Heart's Delight, try not to think it madness," he said; "I beg you, by the greatest, tenderest, fiercest love in all God's world, to marry me."

The girl's hands dropped. "Marry you?" she breathed. The wide blue eyes searched him. Fear was in them—agony. Love was in them, and the birth of an awful joy. "Marry you?" she breathed. Then the sobs came again. "Ah, non, non, non, mon cœur!" she cried, brokenly. "Ah, non! you—you don't know what you ask! You don't know what I am!" She faced him defiantly, the blue eyes full of a hopeless pain. "I am a singer in a café in Paris!" she went on, wildly. "I sing in a café every evening—a little café—a common café, for fifteen francs the day, to keep body and soul together. Do you hear—do you understand? My father was a nobleman, a marquis.

He died, and there was no one to care for me. Don't you hear me? I sing in a café!"

Then the man looked up with a great smile that seemed to carry balm for all tears and troubles. "And if you ground a barrel-organ in front of the Moulin Rouge," he scoffed, "I should still say that I love you better than life or my hopes of heaven. Heart of my soul, will you marry me?"

The girl stared at him again, wide-eyed. "Oh!" she breathed. "Are there such men? You'd marry me—me, *une chanteuse des cafés*?" But I mustn't let you—ah, I mustn't let you!"

"Then," said Livingston, "you'll drive me to crime. I shall be compelled to abduct you and make you marry me."

The girl threw up her head with a little laugh that was a half-sob. "And to-day you must go to Paris?" she asked, after a little.

"I must," said the man, gloomily. "My governor'll be there a fortnight."

"Come back!" whispered the Rose of Heart's Delight.

He threw himself at her feet with a glad, confused cry. "Ah, non; ah, non!" she gasped, in panic; "Ne touche pas!" Then presently divining the pain that was in his eyes, she turned with a wonderful little smile and took his face between slim pink palms and kissed his lips. "Ah, roi de mon cœur!" sobbed the Rose of Heart's Delight.

"This chain—" began the girl, as they disembarked.

"Heaven bless the chain!" said Livingston, with fervor.

"I have a confession to make," she went on, turning very pink. "It—it was, after all, not very difficult to unfasten!"

She looked up with a plaintive, deprecatory smile.

"Heaven bless the chain!" said Livingston, firmly.



IN JUNE

AT night the garden calls me out;
Through perfumed aisles I go.
Red lilies with strange spotted cups
Sway softly to and fro.

Great, dusky moths drift silently
About the half-closed flowers,
And from a deep-blue sky the moon
Lets fall her silver showers.

Throughout the fragrant gloom, dear love,
Each night I search for thee;
Behind each clump of shimmering leaves
I peer expectantly.

Into each corner, dark and still,
Whence blackest shadows start,
I seek for thee, and find thee, love,
Nowhere but in my heart.

LUCY MORRIS.



RASH ADMIRATION

CLUBLEIGH—How do you like your tailor?

SPORTLEIGH—First rate! He's a fine gentleman! Why, I almost wish I could pay him what I owe him.



HOW IT HAPPENED

ELLA—How did you come to marry him? Were you in love with him?

CARRIE—No; but I didn't find it out until it was too late.



WILLING TO TRY HIM

HE—I have broken three girls' hearts.

SHE—Well, have you any money left?

THE GARDEN OF ROSE AND RUE

By Elsa Barker

I CALLED upon the gods to make me wise;
They drew away Love's broidered veil of lies,
And all the mystery the Moeræ know
Was hidden in the mazes of his eyes.

What do I care for gold—it is so cheap!—
Or Fame—the highest will not always keep!
But let me sing and linger in the sun
And love as only poets can—and sleep.

The palest lives some little blossoms bring
To deck Love's altar in the days of Spring.
Were it not so, why moves great Brahma's breath?—
The pain of birth were such a useless thing!

And after all is said and done, my dear,
Love is the reason of our being here;
Labor and Fame are but accessories,
And art itself but Love's superb veneer.

Yet oh, the pity of it all! the vain
Delight that fills again and yet again
The hollow world with little, yearning souls
To swell the awful sum of mortal pain!

O little hour of Love, so wild and sweet,
I gave my soul thy honeydew to eat,
And now the tear-sown pathway of the dead
Echoes the patter of thy flying feet!

The thorny rose of Love has one last sting,
Tipped with a poison strange and maddening,
Who grasps it close fears not the fire of hell—
To love and loathe the selfsame lovely thing.

My false Love whispers lies into my ear;
My listening soul laughs silently to hear—
The low, ironic laughter of the tomb,
Of merry skulls that grin from ear to ear.

Who dares to love unloved is strong and wise—
 The very gods look deep into his eyes;
 The veil of Isis trembles at his touch,
 And life or death holds naught to fear or prize.

O Silent Watcher of the Mystic Fire!
 When to thy sacred temple I retire
 To still my soul, between thine eyes and mine
 Falls like a veil the shadow of desire.

Look where yon travesty of Love stalks by,
 Linked arm in arm with Death—a smiling lie!
 The leering laugh of soulless pleasure brings
 The tears of pity to the lover's eye.

Poor Love, your white wings draggled in the mire,
 Your soul of mystery and eyes of fire
 Forever slandered or misunderstood,
 Your very breath of life a jest—for hire!

Oh, would you know how sweet a thing is Love,
 Go ask the loveless ones who starve for Love—
 The still, pale priest, the love-mocked Magdalen;
 They know, alas! how sweet a thing is Love.

The pain of Love has poisoned all the day.
 O cruel Love, that lures but to betray!
 And cruel the still whisper of the soul:
 "Like songs and worlds, this, too, shall pass away."

O Love, my Love, I pray you, do not weep;
 The world is full of tears, both dear and cheap.
 Is not our little hour too fair to waste?
 Oh, let us laugh and love, before we sleep!

Draw close the mystic garment of Love's bed.
 Here the dim future and the past are wed,
 And brooding Isis veils her mysteries,
 To whelm the world when you and I are dead.



THE WEALTHY COMBINE

WHIPPER—Well, I see there's a billion dollar trust at last.
 SNAPPER—Why, when did the milliners get together?



EPIITAPH for a lifelong worker: He did all he could.

THE MAN OF ONE VICE

By Flora Bigelow Dodge

THEY were engaged to be married—Captain Jackson, the most popular man in Uncle Sam's Army, and Mrs. Malt, a little nobody from nowhere.

He had met her soon after distinguishing himself in the Cuban War, when he came up to New York, punctured and bruised, to rest and enjoy himself, and when he naturally would be most susceptible to feminine charms.

His most intimate friend maintained he must have proposed to her when he was drunk, as sober he could not have thought of anything so foolish, for *he* "knew the woman well"—this with a knowing wink—"and she was not the kind of woman a man would want to marry."

The friend liked to retail exploits of the Captain's hair-breadth escapes that he himself had witnessed down in Cuba—presumably from behind a tree. He had known the Captain from boyhood, and he recorded all kinds of adventures, not always hampered by cold facts, which so often spoil a good story. No, this woman was not good enough for him—nobody was good enough. The gallant Captain did drink—not even his best friend could deny that; but his heart was as big as all outdoors, and sympathy and kindness were his dominating characteristics. Everywhere he went he was beloved, from the time he was a little boy at a military school to now, when he was absolutely worshipped by little Mrs. Malt. From his own few good-for-nothing personal friends—discernment of character not being his strong point—to the little bootblacks who got to know

him in the streets of New York, the one-eyed woman near the ferry and the man that ran the elevator at the hotel—if one of them had a blighted affection, a dying mother or pecuniary embarrassment the Captain found it out first usually, and with his kindly smile would try to be of some real assistance, with the result that all felt happier for his acquaintance.

His sunburnt face with the scar across the forehead, mustache waving in the breeze and rough, whole-souled voice all brought an atmosphere of cheer and brightness that did not leave him even when he was a little intoxicated. When very drunk his whole nature became remorseful and introspective, and he turned to theological problems, with unshed tears in his eyes for a wasted existence. At these times he said he realized he should have been a clergyman—not a soldier. But he wasn't often *very* drunk.

With this guileless nature the gallant Captain, being occasionally imposed on, was not as rich as he otherwise might have been, and when he came to New York for his holiday after the war was over, and had helped most of his acquaintances out of the tight places they would soon slide into again, he stopped at a cheap hotel on Sixth Avenue, though he frequently sat in the gilded chairs of the Waldorf watching the dress parade and enjoying life after his own fashion. In this way he was able to have an extra dollar to spend on his friends' debts and send Mrs. Malt flowers that came from Fifth Avenue instead of from her own neighborhood.

Mrs. Malt lived in the same hotel

on the same floor, more handy to the roof than to the street. She had a sitting-room and a small bedroom that she shared with her child of ten.

Winter and Summer they were seen there mysteriously alone, and what was more natural than that the sympathetic Captain should notice that the lady had eyes red with weeping, that her clothes looked shabby-genteel, and that the little girl had the dirtiest, stub-nosed wax doll he had ever seen, which she cherished with passionate devotion? Even down in the noisy dining-room the doll was consulted about the food first, then the mother—and the three decided on very meagre meals, he thought. Something that one can't explain drew him toward that wax doll, with her moth-eaten blond curls half-hidden under a sunbonnet.

She was hanging sulkily over the little girl's shoulder one day down in the hall. They were evidently waiting for the mother to take them out, and with a military dash he went boldly up to them. By the time the mother came down he knew the child's name was Jessie, after her mother, and that the doll was Belinda. He learned, too, most of the incidents of Belinda's short and eventful life, from having been lost in a railway carriage to having her big wax toe eaten off by a mouse.

This was the beginning of the acquaintance. Within a few days he was a regular caller in the parlor under the gable, and drank tea with Mrs. Malt, Belinda and little Jessie instead of whiskey-and-sodas down stairs.

The room was far from pretty, but there were a few photographs of unmistakable ladies and gentlemen; the stuffy furniture was sensibly arranged for comfort; a large, practical workbasket with unfinished flimsy white garments rested near the student lamp, and there were books about that gave an atmosphere of culture to the room. He liked to be there with these mysterious people, and showed the fact plainly.

His most intimate friend one day

discovered the Captain's weakness for the lady. He was annoyed, as he had social aspirations for the Cuban hero, society being his own business. At first he tried to chaff the Captain about Mrs. Malt, and said, lightly:

"She ran away from her husband some years ago. You'd better find out if he's dead."

Captain Jackson frowned, squared his shoulders and thundered out:

"I don't know that it's any of your damned business, sir, whether my future wife's husband's dead or not!"

Then they changed the subject.

"Now look here, Jackson, I have asked for an invitation for you to the first private ball of the season, and the smartest. You're quite a hero, you know, and lots of people want to know you, and I'm going to take you about a little, even if you are engaged. It's good for you to have a few influential friends, particularly as you are to marry. You will see all the loveliest women in New York. You are getting so good I am worried about you. You don't drink any more, you go to church——"

"I tell you I'm in love, sir, and going to be married. What do you expect?"

"Yes, yes, I know all that. I only want some of these New York women to know what a brick a rough man like you can be; in society they see only things like me. They have all been reading about you, and have seen your picture in the papers. If you make your *début* at Mrs. Factory's ball they'll be falling over each other to meet you, and you'll see the four crowned heads, and be swimming around in the smart set with Mrs. Terrence and all the rest of them. It's nothing against the pretty woman you're so loyal to for me to present you to some people of more position and wealth and fashion. Come along."

So Captain Jackson went to his first smart ball in New York, and was more than dazzled by all the gleaming necks and jewels that he saw and by the graciousness with which he was

welcomed by tuft-hunters. His nature was too simple to have any of his pleasure spoiled by the slightest suspicion that it was not his own personality half of them cared about.

He danced until his legs ached and beads of perspiration trickled down his face, wilted his collar and shriveled his shirt bosom. He was absolutely unconscious, enjoyed everything keenly, and found himself taking down to supper the hostess, who was the oldest lady in the room. His friend whispered to him that this was a great honor. She was a little bag of skin and bones held together with lace and diamonds.

He ate everything that appeared, and sailed into the champagne with the recklessness of a soldier. Suddenly the air seemed to grow close, the room swam, and his hostess looked more like a bird than ever.

He looked at her with disgust, and sang, softly:

“ When we are married, why, what shall we do?
I can’t be faithful, sweetheart, to you.”

The lady gave a stern smile and said, politely, with a manner denoting that she had seen gentlemen in his condition before:

“ What were you thinking about when you just sang, Captain Jackson?”

“ I was thinking,” he said, dreamily, with tears springing to his eyes, “ that you made me feel so at home here. I feel quite myself—so natural that a sweet old Moody and Sankey hymn came back to me which I learned at my mother’s knee, and I longed to sing it at your knee. You remind me something of my mother! She died when I was born. She was too old to have a child. . . . Don’t you feel well?”

Mrs. Factory stiffened backward and gave an appealing look at the little millionaire on her right, who was convulsed behind his glass of champagne.

The Captain sighed, wiped his brow with his napkin, looked sadly round the table, and pushed his plate of ice savagely away from him, muttering:

“ I don’t want ice till I’m dead. Take it away.”

“ What a pity,” began the hostess, drawing her shoulders up so that the hollows of her collarbones should not be so conspicuous—“ what a pity that the rooms always get so hot at balls that one can hardly breathe; such a pity—”

The Captain turned sympathetically toward her with his head on one side.

“ Ah,” he said, drawing nearer, “ music always makes me sad; it makes me think of my misspent life. I wish I were a clergyman, and could make you follow me, and sell your crown and hair and give up everything false and give to the poor; they need so much, so much! Here we are all eating too much, drinking too much and not wearing enough clothes!”

His eyes rested sadly on the lady’s neck, which looked hardly strong enough to bear the weight of her jeweled head.

“ What a pity you aren’t a—a clergyman,” she said, sarcastically. “ You seem so fitted to be one—”

Then she made the movement for rising from the table, and his friend came to the rescue, whispering:

“ Come home with me at once; don’t take Mrs. Factory up to the ballroom—you have had too much to drink. Just say good-night.”

The Captain turned to his hostess and said, with great dignity and a most obsequious bow:

“ What a pity I must say good-night! I fear—I am not—well.” And then, putting his arm through his friend’s, he murmured, reflectively: “ ‘What a pity, what a pity!’ It’s a damned shame that woman can’t say anything I can remember, except that!”

In a few moments the two were purring home in an electric cab. The Captain was penitent and stupid, his friend excited and annoyed. He could not miss this chance of giving him a piece of his mind.

“ Well, you have made an awful ass of yourself!” he remarked.

“ I know,” answered the Captain, meekly.

"You've missed the chance of your life of getting into the arms of society, that were held out open to you——"

"Her arms were too thin. I wouldn't get into them if I could," he growled.

"And you're going to make an ass of yourself again——"

"I'm sure to," returned the Captain, wiping his eyes and opening the window.

"Before it's too late, think what you are doing—think!"

"I know, but I like the night air—I like to sleep out of doors; I'm used to it; it's in the blood; my father was a miner——"

"I don't want to hear the story of your life. I'm not thinking of that window—and don't you go to sleep. I want to talk to you—about your engagement to Mrs. Malt. Don't you see you're nothing but a great big overgrown baby. You know nothing of life and people; you know nothing about her past. What was she doing two years ago? Ha, ha! I know—ask her—" He laughed unmusically. In the Captain's present humble frame of mind he dared talk to him frankly.

"I knew the husband she ran away from," he continued; "he hadn't a vice. She was just full of beans; he's dead, perhaps, now. You ask her about it yourself, and if she's honest she'll tell you the truth and make your hair curl."

"What are you daring to say? I know she'll tell me the truth; she's a Southern lady, sir. Do you know what that means? You needn't follow me, but I'm going up to her sitting-room—she said she would wait up for me. I'm almost ashamed to go, but I'm going, and I'll ask her to tell me about her past, and she'll tell me. I'll be married this week, and to-morrow, sir, you will hear what day. Good-night."

The Captain left him and walked carefully up to the top floor. His face looked haggard, but he was almost sober. She had never seen him look like that. His eyes were loveless and hard.

"Tell me," he said, "aren't you a good woman?"

He closed the door and leaned against it in front of her, taking off his hat and throwing it on the sofa. His eyes were fixed on the sewing in her lap. The look of pain that spread over her features was for the first time lost on him.

She raised her head proudly and said:

"Captain Jackson, you have every right to ask me that, although I hoped you wouldn't. I meant to tell you before we were married. I am not what the world calls a good woman. Our engagement you must consider broken."

She rose and tried to pass from the room, but he intercepted her.

"Sit down," he said, more gently, looking into her face. "Sit down and tell me all; I can understand anything, Jessie dear. I have been brutal, I know. I was just a little drunk. How you must have suffered!"

In his sympathy for her suffering he forgot his own shattered ideal, and only felt for her troubles. He knelt down beside her and buried his face between his hands on her knee. She laid her cool fingers on his head and moved them softly through his hair until she could control her voice, and then spoke:

"I married, very young, an old man, and for many reasons I learned to hate and despise him. He killed my senses, my ideals and my morals, and so one day I just ran away from him, through some reckless impulse. I took my child and a little money and came up to Baltimore. There I met a man who had known my husband. My courage, health and spirits appealed to him; I liked his kindness and thought he was fond of me. I enjoyed being alone there; but soon my child became ill, and I grew anxious and dull, and that bored him. I was worried about money matters, too, and didn't know how I should be able to manage with what I had, and my future looked dreary. He often told me how much money good-looking women make, and how much I

appealed to him, but in my trouble I felt I was losing him. I then realized for the first time that only one side of my nature appealed to him, and that when I was sad and lonely he would leave me for gayer companions.

"The doctor had told me that my child needed a trained nurse and some special treatment. Well, it was the same old story; I had the best nurses, the best doctors for little Jess. I played my part to the bitter end. I entertained him in the evenings, I sang, I laughed and talked and fell into his different moods. Oh, I worked hard enough for the money he gave me! Then, after six weeks, he went away for a few days. My child was better, and I realized then how I hated him—how there was no real kindness or generosity in him, how little he cared for me! The strain had been so awful I felt an old woman. Then he came back; he stopped to see me after his railway journey one evening. I didn't care how I looked that night, or what he thought. I flung myself down on the sofa and cried myself nearly sick, and told him that everything was over.

"He couldn't understand, and when he tried to put his selfish face near mine I could have killed him—I couldn't bear him close. He kept saying he couldn't understand why I was crying, now that the child was well, and I told him I was crying *because* the child was well, because now I could cry and could be natural, and not pretend anything any more. I told him I hated him, now that I knew what he was; knew that there was nothing good or honorable in his nature. He muttered something about my being hysterical, and having chosen my own life, and that I couldn't blame anyone but myself. Oh, he didn't understand anything of what I had been through; he just hadn't any soul, so he left me, and I ran up to my baby and kissed her until she woke crying. I shall never forget that night.

"The next day I left Baltimore and came to New York—these rooms. My husband has died since and I have

a little money for Jess—very little, as you know. I have hated men and kept to myself these last two years, until I knew you, with your unselfishness, your kindness. It has all been like a breath of heaven to me.

"You never tried to make up to me because you saw I was living alone and had no position. You aren't suspicious, like other men. Oh, I have learned and felt so much and changed so much! My reason for leaving my husband is my own secret. No woman wants to leave a man unless there are reasons driving her away. We all want protection and love. I could not have married you without telling you all this. I know how much a woman's purity means to a man. I felt I had no right to expect you to marry me when you knew. You know I always was putting off our wedding day, because I was *afraid* to tell you. I was afraid of losing you out of my life."

She stopped speaking, and it seemed in the silence as if each tick of the clock was the signal of her doom. The mental blow sobered the Captain. He could hardly believe his ears. She felt the struggle within him to master his emotion—to feel more for her than for himself.

At last he spoke, tenderly, raising his head from her knees and holding her two hands in his.

"Jessie, when I think of all the things that men do that women forgive; when I think of my own life in comparison to yours—why, I'm not fit to tie your shoe strings. I never really loved a woman before. I am sorry I was so brutal at first. You are too good for me. You *are* good—it shows in your face. We can be what we really want to be, and you and I shall be better helping each other. Your love will help me to overcome *my* great weakness. I didn't know how much I loved you until you told me all this, Jessie, dear. Why, the idea of breaking our engagement! Well, I guess not. If ever a woman needed a husband and protector it's you, dear. I understand so well what you went through—the struggle of it

all. That man couldn't feel for you, it wasn't in him; I know *just* how you suffered, and as for him, I'd like to break his neck. That is the kind of man that ought to be kicked; anyone who wouldn't appreciate a woman like you ought to be well kicked. My God! think of making love to a woman under those circumstances! No wonder your poor little face is sad! no wonder I loved you the first time I saw you with that child and the squash-faced doll! What a terrible thing it must be to lose one's illusions about people, to find people different from what you expected! Perhaps I am so stupid I don't see the illusions when I might. I know I'm a rough fellow, but I like to believe in my friends, and when we understand we usually can make allowances—just as we hope a higher power does for us. God isn't going to judge us as these damned women all judge each other.

"But tell me, Jessie, the name of that man; I'm going to marry you to-morrow—no more waiting for anybody—but I'm going to find that man to-night if he's in this city, and spoil his beauty. Tell me his name; where is he now?"

A knock at the door, and the intimate friend appeared. He looked disheveled and upset. His eyes met those of Mrs. Malt.

"You've been listening," said the Captain, with contempt.

"Only the last few words," said the friend, coloring slightly.

"Tell me his name, Jessie," the

Captain asked again, forgetting the third person in his eagerness.

"Captain Jackson," said Mrs. Malt, with a new light in her face he had never seen before, "if anyone has taught us anything we should acknowledge it; he taught me self-control and how to keep a secret."

"I want to tell you," began the friend—"I came up to tell you that I humbly apologize for having ever said anything against this lady. I feel I never knew her before, and you, my dear fellow, everyone knows, are no judge of human nature. I was anxious only for your happiness, and anxious about whom you were to marry; but I was wrong—she is worthy of you."

"I tell you—" began the Captain, excitedly.

But he was stopped by Mrs. Malt, who laid her hand on his shoulder and said:

"Let me speak first, dear. You have taught me to-night how to love more than I ever dreamed I could before, and—how to forgive. I have had one rule for myself always which I hope never to break, and that is, not to kill people's illusions. The man or woman who does that does harm in the world; let the world sleep in peace to-night, let us part in peace to-night, and may God give me strength to stand by your side as your wife and feel when life's journey is ended that I have kept you from seeing an idol shattered or a confidence misplaced."



AUTHOR TO EDITOR

LET brokers swindle the unwary
And sell them stock that nothing earns;
I choose investments literary
Because I get such quick returns.

G. L. H.

UNE DISTRACTION

Par Henri Lavedan

“ **V**OUS voulez savoir,” nous répondit le baron Malten, “ pourquoi je refuse de jouer aux cartes avec vous? Je vais vous le dire.”

Mais, tout d'abord, il faut se bien représenter le baron. C'est un homme qui porte à l'aise la cinquantaine, grand, l'air de quelqu'un, aux traits réguliers, avec des vêtements dont les plis sont aussi réguliers que les traits, des manières d'une froideur polie, circonspecte et que rien ne démonte. On sent que chez lui tout est en ordre comme dans une armoire flamande. Son esprit est aussi lent que sa parole. Il sait, mais son acquis prend un certain temps à se formuler et à déboucher de ses lèvres. Si les tortues s'exprimaient et que ce fût dans un salon, je suis persuadé qu'elles le feraient à la façon de Malten. Sa tenue est correcte et sobre, son geste parcimonieux, son sourire très rare, presque exceptionnel. Ancien capitaine de cavalerie de l'armée autrichienne, il a été forcé de quitter le service après Sadowa, où il a eu le genou broyé. Ce genou a pu être rétabli vaille que vaille, mais le baron a économisé de sa blessure une boiterie légère de la jambe gauche, qui n'est d'ailleurs pas sans grâce, et depuis, quand il marche, il a l'air de parader vaguement sur le Prater, et de chasser encore, par un reste d'habitude, le sabre absent, le joli sabre, ami intime des éperons, qui traîne et racle avec un bruit clair dans la vie bottée des cavaliers de tous les pays. En somme, c'est l'étranger, demi-muet, qui fait bien dans un château durant la saison des chasses. On le sait pauvre et fier, on l'invite—plus comme Au-

trichien que comme baron—il accepte avec hauteur, et comme il est très bien élevé, qu'il écoute, rempli d'une attention presque disciplinaire, on lui trouve de l'esprit latent et chacun le déclare d'un commerce agréable.

Et maintenant que vous le voyez tant bien que mal, écoutez-le:

“ C'est une histoire,” dit-il, “ une petite histoire très ordinaire, très peu intéressante. Voilà. Sachez-le donc —j'ai triché au jeu.”

Tout le monde à ces mots se regarda, ces dames, nous, les deux valets sournois, qui emportaient sur les plateaux les tasses de café vides. Malten constata notre stupeur, hocha doucement sa calme tête de vieux Vercingétorix d'où tombaient deux longues moustaches grises imperméables, et confirma:

“ Oui, moi, Malten.”

Puis, s'étant renversé dans son fauteuil, en allongeant sur le tapis, par un geste qui lui était familier, sa moindre jambe, celle de Sadowa, il poursuivit en ces termes, et toujours avec une très sage lenteur, la lenteur d'un cerveau myope qui pense pas à pas.

II

“ Il y a vingt-cinq ans, j'étais tout jeune marié, tout jeune sous-lieutenant, tout jeune en énormément de choses. Depuis, j'ai vieilli. Elle est morte, ma pauvre jeune femme! et je ne trouve plus ma vie ressemblante. Je n'existe plus guère que par habitude, pour continuer. A cette époque-là, dont je vous parle, nous demeurions à Vienne, naturellement, dans un joli petit intérieur du fau-

bourg de Wieden. Le soir, quand le temps était beau, nous allions nous promener, nous passions par Elisabethbrücke, et les huit statues du pont nous ont vus plus de cent fois, plus de mille fois marcher lentement en nous donnant le bras. Nous causions. Elle redoutait la guerre, moi je la souhaitais. Nous nous étonnions d'être mari et femme, moi et elle plutôt que tel autre et telle autre, et cela se terminait par des projets d'ordre et de bonheur tranquille. Quelquefois nous discutions sur la façon d'élever les enfants que nous n'avions pas encore. Mais quand le temps n'était pas beau, nous restions enfermés chez nous. Après le repas, on débarrassait la table, on apportait la lampe et il n'y avait pas de plus grand plaisir pour nous que de jouer aux cartes, presque toujours à l'écarté. Nous étions aussi joueurs, aussi mauvais joueurs l'un que l'autre. Quand je perdais je criais, je sonnais de la trompette, je faisais une scène épouvantable. Quand elle perdait, elle se taisait, mais son petit nez se pinçait, ses lèvres tremblaient de colère, et je la devinai aussi malheureuse dans son silence que moi dans mon empertement.

“ Un jour cela devint si pénible que nous prîmes le parti définitif d'en rire, et de faire comme les gamins qui ne jouent pas sérieusement; et alors, en manière de plaisanterie, je commençai à tricher, à tricher tout de bon, très ouvertement. Elle m'imita de son côté, avec autant de sérieux, et c'était de vraies joies d'enfant quand l'un de nous était parvenu à avoir les cinq atouts dans son jeu et qu'il les abattait d'un air candide:

“ ‘Mais vous trichez, monsieur,’ s'écriait-elle.

“ Et je répondais:

“ ‘Oui, madame. C'est le seul moyen de gagner!’

“ Ah! on était très content, le cœur ne pesait pas triste, et avec un peu de bière fraîche, on avait de tout à fait excellentes soirées.

“ Or, c'est vers ce temps que je fus invité pour la première fois chez le général Mohr. Avec quelle joie j'ac-

ceptai cet honneur! Dès l'après-midi, ma pauvre femme avait étalé sur le lit mon uniforme; et comme elle m'aida tandis que je m'habillais! C'est elle qui m'accrocha le sabre, qui me donna le dernier coup d'œil, et quand elle me dit adieu sur le palier, car elle ne m'accompagnait pas, elle avait dans le regard une telle fierté douce que j'eus, une seconde, la pensée de dire:

“ ‘ Ma chère, je ne vais pas chez le général, tu es ma femme, la meilleure créature au monde, et je reste avec toi, en uniforme, et en uniforme pour toi toute seule.’

“ Je n'en fis rien pourtant. Ah! que j'eus tort!

“ Lorsque j'arrivai chez le général, croyez que je ne regrettai pas d'y être venu. Il n'y a rien de plus fier et de plus beau que ces réceptions dans notre pays. Ce soir-là, c'était particulièrement magnifique. Il y avait tous les officiers du corps d'armée, il y avait une nuée d'archiducs, et ils sont superbes, nos archiducs, ils vous ont, dans la démarche, dans l'allure, dans la silhouette un je ne sais quoi d'altier, de monarchique, à les croire descendus des chevaux de bronze qu'ils enfourcheront après leur mort quand ils seront statues équestres sur les places avec de grands chapeaux belliqueux où flambent des plumes. Des femmes je ne vous parlerai pas. Elles se pressaient là toutes aussi, nos Viennoises, et blondes, et la peau trempée dans du lait, et les yeux bleus comme de l'eau de source au clair de lune! On tombait amoureux de chacune et de toutes à la fois, surtout si on les regardait danser, car elles vous chipaient l'âme et vous l'emportaient dans les plis de leur robe ailée. Et puis, et puis il y avait Strauss, le grand Strauss, qui conduisait comme Dieu le père! Mais je m'arrête, parce que je sens que je deviendrais ridicule et que je ne veux point vous voir sourire. Moi, je contemplais toutes ces splendeurs avec de l'étonnement joyeux, une certaine fierté de me trouver là, d'en être, et par instants je songeais aussi: ‘ La petite s'amuserait si elle était avec

moi, oui, et je la mènerais, à mon bras, au buffet, choisir une mousse au café.”

III

“ J'ARRIVAI ainsi dans un petit salon très diplomatique, de dimensions restreintes—je le vois encore comme à la minute où j'y entrai—un salon aux murs tendus de satin cerise, éclairé par des torchères dorées où brûlaient de très hautes, de très solennelles bougies, et garni de plusieurs tables d'acajou et de drap vert autour desquelles jouaient des hommes âgés, resplendissant de décorations. On y parlait à voix basse ainsi que dans une chapelle, et les accords lointains des orchestres interrompaient seuls, par intervalles, les chuchotements des personnages qui comptaient leurs points, battaient les cartes ou froisaient des jetons de nacre et d'argent. Je fus sur-le-champ fort impressionné; déjà même je m'apprêtais à quitter ce sanctuaire quand, à quelques pas, une voix m'interpella. Je me retournai. C'était mon colonel qui m'avait aperçu et qui me proposait de jouer un écarté avec lui. Je m'inclinai donc et je pris aussitôt la place que venait de laisser vide son partenaire. Plusieurs personnes nous entourèrent, debout, avec des conseils pleins les yeux, et je me souviens que j'éprouvais un sentiment de vraie vanité à être vu ainsi publiquement en compagnie de mon supérieur. Le colonel proposa la partie à cinq florins; j'acceptai. Nous tirâmes pour savoir qui *ferait*. Il amena un sept, moi un valet. J'eus la vole. Ensuite, il joua d'autorité et eut la vole à son tour.

“ Nous étions deux à deux. C'était à moi de donner les cartes, j'avais le paquet dans la main. Comme je les distribuais, je remarquai, dans un mouvement un peu brusque, la dernière carte en dessous du jeu. C'était un roi de carreau, un splendide roi de carreau, tout rouge. Alors, saisi, enchaîné par l'habitude, je me dis, dans une lueur de malice, qu'il serait amusant de l'avoir, ce roi, pour voir la tête scandalisée de ma chère petite femme; je me crus, en un mot, dans

notre salle à manger du faubourg de Wieden, sous la lampe, un soir d'hiver; et paisiblement, naturellement, je cueillis le roi de carreau, que je retournai avec un air de surprise en déclarant:

“ ‘Tiens! le roi!’

“ Mais je n'eus pas plutôt achevé qu'une pâleur, que je sentais glacée, m'envahit le visage. Le colonel m'avait vu, il s'était arrêté, et il me regardait en silence.

“ Haletant, stupide, fou de honte, j'aurais voulu tomber, rouler mort.

“ Là-bas, dans les salons, l'orchestre attaquait la jolie reprise des ‘Joies de la Vie.’ Et le colonel me regardait toujours, de son même regard fixe, dur, méprisant et attristé. Il détourna enfin les yeux et très froide-ment:

“ ‘Eh bien, puisque vous l'avez, marquez-le.’

“ La partie fut vite terminée. Il perdit. Alors il se leva et, du bout de ses gants blancs, chassant vers moi les cinq florins:

“ ‘Vous avez gagné, monsieur.’

“ J'avais encore mal ressaisi mes esprits, à tel point la douleur et le désespoir me paralysaient. Mais quand je vis mon colonel s'éloigner, je ne voulus pas le laisser partir ainsi.

“ C'est un honnête homme, pensai-je, un brave homme, un père de famille, je vais tout lui raconter, comment cela s'est fait malgré moi, et il va rire. Sans doute, il sera le premier à en rire, il me tapera sur l'épaule et tout sera fini.

“ Je l'avais rejoint. Dès que je fus à ses côtés, je lui dis, à voix basse et suppliante:

“ ‘Mon colonel—mon colonel—’

“ Mais jamais je ne pus trouver autre chose. Il s'était arrêté, il me regardait comme tout à l'heure, et son regard de nouveau me pénétrait, me brûlait. Alors je compris que j'étais perdu, déshonoré dans son estime; je sentis la piètre invraisemblance de la vérité si je la lui disais, la pauvreté maladroite de cette excuse qu'il prendrait pour un bas mensonge; aussi je courbai la tête, je me tus, et il s'en alla.

“ A dater de ce jour, je n'ai plus

aimé mon métier, quoique je fusse le mieux noté de mes camarades; c'est que partout, au quartier, sur le champ de manœuvres, dans les maisons où nous nous rencontrions, je sentais se poser sur moi, sans cesse, le regard de mon colonel, le regard muet qui pensait toujours: 'Lieutenant Malten, vous êtes un voleur.' Enfin, je

fus cependant nommé capitaine au bout de quelque temps. Et puis je la perdis, ma pauvre chère femme, avec qui je trichais. Et puis Sadowa interrompit, comme vous savez, ma belle carrière. Et puis voilà. J'ai peut-être été un peu long, je vous fais mes excuses, messieurs. Maintenant, jouez sans moi."



BALLADE OF DRUDGE

TO foreign fields and pastures new
 Old Drudge's daughters fit and fly;
 To-day they have Berlin in view,
 To-morrow off to Rome they hie.
 They pass no place of pleasure by,
 And leave no wonder-book unconned.
 Mamma goes, too, but papa's shy—
 Poor papa's never crossed the pond.

Of languages they know a few,
 No tactful native will deny;
 Italian, French, and German, too;
 Perhaps there's none beneath the sky
 That may their lingual skill outvie;
 But Drudge, it's odd, was never fond
 His tongue at foreign phrase to try—
 Poor papa's never crossed the pond.

Somehow he manages to strew
 Their paths with flowers, afar and nigh.
 He knows that nothing else will do,
 For sweets they'll have, though they come high.
 Their clothes are up to date, but my!
 Late styles and Drudge ill correspond;
 His last year's suit will satisfy—
 Poor papa's never crossed the pond.

ENVOY

Poor Drudge! Well may he rant and sigh;
 His promised word is like his bond.
 "The office" knows the reason why
 Poor papa's never crossed the pond.

FRANK WALCOTT HUTT.



REASON FOR DOUBT

C^HAPPIE—It is reported around that I am engaged.
 SHE—Well, you don't believe everything you hear, I hope.

BY THE MONASTERY WALL

By E. Carl Litsey

BROTHER ALOYSIUS was young. He had taken the vows not over a fortnight before, and the rigid asceticism to which he was now subject was galling to a man always used to the pleasures and comforts of life. But the old life was gone—he had resigned it voluntarily, because all of the light went out of it one day and his mind was plunged in darkness. Then when he felt Doubt creeping stealthily toward his soul, he applied for admission to the brotherhood. His novitiate was now over, and his vows would bind him to the end.

In this quiet life of solitude and prayer he felt that he could draw closer to the Creator whom he had come near to denying on that day of his bitter pain. Already his strong soul throbbed a little less painfully, and he was trying to draw a veil over the past. Until this was done he could not be at peace. To forget was the only hope, he told himself, of eternal rest. To live and to move in the same old atmosphere would have meant the annihilation of faith. And so he put away the world he had known.

The coarse brown cassock that enveloped Brother Aloysius's figure did not detract from his appearance. His tall, erect form and broad, square shoulders made him conspicuous among his silent brethren. Beneath his cowl was the same strong, expressive face and the calm gray eyes.

The first time Brother Aloysius was set to work in the garden he smiled a little as he took the hoe and went about his task. His hands were white and soft, but the sun and the handle of the implement would

quickly make them brown and rough. No matter. Humiliation of the flesh was to be part of his life now. There were some trees in the garden, but the vegetables about which he was to stir the earth did not grow near them. It was mid-afternoon, and soon his hands were blistered and the perspiration ran in streams from his pulsing forehead. He stopped for a moment and looked around. There, in the shadow of the wall, were some growing potatoes that needed attention. He gathered up his cassock and walked toward the shade, noting as he did so that part of the wall had fallen down—at one place it was not much higher than his knees. He thought he would report this when his respite from labor came, and throwing back his cowl so that the breeze might play about his head, he bent again to his work.

Suddenly he stopped. Peeping from the grass almost under his feet were two blue violets, side by side. Another stroke of his hoe and they would have been uprooted. And as he gazed a face grew about them. Those trailing ferns were her hair; those gauzy cobwebs were the lace she wore about her throat. And the past that he had striven and prayed to forget rose up in might. He shuddered, as if an icy wind had blown on him, and pressing his lips hard together, raised his eyes to heaven for strength.

But in the gap in the wall before him was the same face—this time in the flesh, and in the soft blue eyes was a look of pity and of love.

“Salome!” he gasped, and yet again, “Salome!”

“Why are you here, Henry, and in

this garb?" she asked, quietly, but the roses on her breast were fluttering.

"Why?—why? You ask me why?"

"You told me that you loved me."

"Don't taunt me, Salome! Are you as wicked as you are beautiful? I'm trying to forget—to forget!" and he closed his eyes while a spasm of pain shook his form.

"Forget! Can you forget me?"

She placed her hands on the crumbling stones and leaned toward him, while on her lips and in her eyes gathered that smile which had brought him to her feet.

"God help me—no!" And as he bowed his head his strong frame shook again.

"Listen, Henry. That letter was a lie—the plot of a jealous woman! She practiced my handwriting till the forgery was perfect, then, in her hatred, she sent it to you. You dropped it on your library table, and it found its

way to me. You should have come to me, but the blow was so great that you could not think, and in your despair you came here. Henry, I have come to take you away."

He shook his head dumbly.

"You shall come," she continued, "else your love was a sham! Is your hard, iron bed softer than my arms? Is the black bread you eat sweeter than the honey of my mouth?"

"My vows, Salome!" he answered, in desperation, looking her full in the face. "They are taken, and for life!"

"Your vows to me were given first and are just as sacred. I hold you to them."

She was leaning closer, and the perfume from her garments reached him.

"Come, Henry, my love," she whispered, in the old, caressing accents.

His hand let the hoe fall on the fresh earth, then sought her own.

And thus, led by love, he passed into the world again.



A FOOD-FLOWER FANCY

WHY should the gobbler, when the Autumn blows
Its golden pipe, that charms the squirrel's playtime,
Upon his fragile wishbone sport a rose
That breathes the sunny spirit of the Maytime?

About as inconsistent as a fad
Of decoration, while the sleighbell jingles,
'Twould be to put an aster on the shad,
To gleam and glimmer on his silver shingles.

The gentian should the gobbler's prow adorn
In Autumn's mellow yellow hocus-pocus—
The shad should wear when Martius blows his horn,
To be *au fait*, the olden golden crocus.

And so all edibles that e'er indulge
In *boutonnieres*, though minus rhyme or reason,
Should on the hypercritic gain the bulge
By wearing only buds that fit the season.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

THE AMERICAN WIDOW

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

WHEN *la veuve Americaine* first came to Petersburg it fell to me, Dmitri Ivanovitch Nordoff, to have the honor of presenting her name as a toast to my regiment. This was on the occasion of the regular monthly dinner. I was at that time captain in the regiment "Grand Duke Michael," on duty at Peterhof.

There was considerable mystery about *la veuve Americaine*, as everyone called her, though there was more than one American widow in Petersburg that season. The supposed mystery, however, but added piquancy to the charm of the lady. This widow, God knows, was never intended to be a widow. Yet one she was, by the inscrutable decree of Destiny, and she was also the most beautiful woman in Petersburg.

She was wealthy, very wealthy. Even in the beginning she would not be content with the cramped accommodations of a hotel. No; she must have a great house, a palace. Of course, she obtained what she desired. There was a palace vacant on the Quai de la Cour, and after a few formalities with the agents of the estate to which it belonged, she took possession.

There was one peculiarity about the beautiful widow. She cared nothing for her compatriots in Petersburg. She maintained a formal acquaintance with the Embassy people, but did not become at all intimate with them. She did not meet Petersburg society through them, as her letters to the set in which she moved were from a duchess of France. Yet the Americans were only too glad to

claim the widow, though she paid so little attention to them.

"Do you know *our* Mrs. Ogden Alexander?" an American would ask a Russian.

"Oh, yes; the great Madame Alexander," the Russian would respond, and the American would nod in gratified pride.

Did a Russian ask Mrs. Alexander if she knew someone or other in America, she would respond in a delightfully bored manner that she probably did. She was the *grande dame* in her every movement and word, and that is more than can be said of some women who bear the greatest names of Holy Russia. From a social standpoint she was the rage of the season. From the Grand Duchess Vladimir down, the most aristocratic section of Russian society was proud to be included in *la veuve Americaine's* list of friends. There was great rivalry to obtain invitations to her dinners. And those dinners! They were small—never over twenty covers, and every appointment was perfect. One's neighbors at the table were sure to be just the people one would wish to have next to him! That was an art in which Madame Alexander excelled, the proper placing of dinner guests. Then the cuisine and wines were quite beyond criticism, and there was left nothing to be desired.

But the woman herself?

Did you ever see a tall, slender tree that bowed and swayed with consummate grace before the winds? She had that same grace. Did you ever see the brilliant color of a poppy in July, flaunting its scarlet against the golden grain in the wheat fields? Her

lips flaunted their scarlet against the cream of her skin in just the same manner. And her eyes—ah, there is nothing on God's earth with which to compare them. They were black, deep and fathomless, with a sparkle and a flash like sable gems.

I knew in the beginning that it would be only a question of time until I should be suing for the love of this most beautiful woman. Day by day, as I saw her again and again, the conviction grew and was more and more a part of my life. And yet I could never bring myself to speak. I, who had been a man of the world for many years, and who had had as many loves as one can remember, could not tell her that I loved her. A man of the world with his grand passion may be as timid and bashful as a youth before his first shrine.

There were many opportunities when I could have told her what was in my heart. There were skating parties on the glistening surface of the frozen Neva; there were secluded conversations in the drawing-rooms of her palace; there were long drives in the *troika* behind my three black Orloffs; there were meetings at social gatherings. But when we were left alone I could talk only of the superficial things of life. I, who was once noted for the extravagance of my flatteries, could not bring myself to utter a few complimentary words concerning the effect of a gown, or the contrast between a rose and the beautifully formed hand that held it. Then I would go to my own home, and seated before the blazing fire, imagine a thousand phrases that I might have said, or countless ways in which I could have shown my feelings even without words. I suffered.

It was the arrival of my mother, the Countess Tatania, in Petersburg which first changed the current of events. By virtue of our family she was one of the ladies-in-waiting to the Dowager Empress, and, in fact, a lifelong friend of Her Majesty. My mother had been in Paris during the Winter, and her return to Petersburg was entirely unexpected.

So, when on a Tuesday I received a telegram stating that she would arrive on Thursday, I at once summoned the butler and ordered that our palace be put in its usual formal state. I had kept bachelor hall for some months, so that it was hardly fitted for the reception of such a particular person as the Countess Tatania.

In due time, on Thursday, although the train was five hours late, owing to a heavy fall of snow in the province, my mother arrived, accompanied by her maids, her pet leopard and her own special ebony roulette table. She kissed me with a great deal of warmth, sent me to see that the leopard was properly taken care of, and proceeded to supervise the unpacking of her trunks, scolding the maids meanwhile for their carelessness.

"So, Dmitri Ivanovitch," she remarked that night, as we sat at dinner, "you are playing the devoted to Madame Alexander—"

"—*la veuve Americaine*," added I.

"Precisely," my mother remarked, as she took a dainty sip of Château Yquem.

There was silence for a few moments.

"*La veuve* is enormously wealthy," my mother remarked, looking at the rose-cut chandelier that hangs in the centre of the dining-room.

"Indeed!" said I, laconically, knowing exactly what my mother was driving at.

"Money is a great thing," said my mother, smiling at me in the easiest manner possible.

"It is, indeed," I assented.

"And our wheat crops show decided shortages of late years," she continued.

"But the increase in production at the salt mine more than covers the deficiency in the wheat," I answered her.

"Bah!" cried my mother, in disgust; "we Nordoffs are not so poor that we are obliged to figure the sources and amounts of our revenues."

"True," I admitted, not caring to

remind my mother that she had started the discussion as to the revenues of our house. My mother, who was a Posadowsky, has the violent temper for which that noble house is celebrated.

"Well," said she, with a fine air of changing the topic, "it seems to me that you are at an age when you should find a suitable mate. You must not let the old Muscovite family of Nordoff die away, for, as you know, you are the last male member of the house."

"That is so," I said, as if the idea had come to me for the first time. Then, with an air of enlightenment, I asked: "How would the young Princess Dolgourki suit you?"

"Abominably!" cried my mother. "Why, she squints and has bad teeth."

"The Circassian countess whom we met at Nijni?"

My mother snorted. "She has the morals of a—of a—Circassian!" she cried.

"Madame Golchow?" I asked, smiling.

"Madame Golchow!" gasped my mother. "Glory be to God, Dmitri Ivanovitch; you don't mean that?"

"Why not?"

"The daughter of a serf on your father's estate?"

"But a very wealthy woman, and you know that money is a great thing, especially as our revenues from the wheat crops are diminishing." I lighted a cigarette and waited for the storm.

"Just God!" cried my mother, rising and sweeping from the table, "is it possible that I should ever have given birth to as stupid and headstrong a son as this!" and she left the dining-room.

I sat at the table ruminating over affairs until my valet came and reminded me that I had seats at the opera, and that I had an engagement to call for Count von Prizwald, of the German Embassy. So I rose, was helped into my wraps and passed through the three vestibules to my waiting carriage. The opera of the evening was Wagner's "Die Wal-

küre," and the Count, who was a great enthusiast over the works of his fellow countryman, was to point out to me the great beauties of the production.

I arrived at von Prizwald's house rather late and found him awaiting me in a state of mind bordering on frenzy. His eyeglass had fallen from his eye, his dress shirt was crumpled and his orders hung in a disarranged medley on his dress coat.

"Come, come!" he cried, excitedly, catching me by the arm as soon as we were seated; "have your man drive like the devil; we must not miss one bar of this divine opera." To soothe my friend I gave orders that the horses were not to be spared, and in consequence we were in my box some moments before the curtain rose. In the midst of a very learned dissertation on Wagner and his school I espied *la veuve Americaine* in a neighboring box, and returned her gracious salutation. The Count von Prizwald, wrapped in the glory of Wagner's music, was oblivious to the world and failed to notice that I was far more interested in the occurrences in Madame Alexander's box than in the opera. At the end of the first act I made my way to madame's box, pressed her hand slightly, greeted those who were fortunate enough to be in her company, and asked permission to call on the following afternoon. She shook her graceful head.

"I am sorry that I must say no," she said. "Sir Charles Vyain is to be spared from his duties at the British Embassy long enough to initiate me into the mysteries of bridge. Then, also, I must go to a charity bazaar, of which I am a patroness, not to mention an appointment with my tailor. However, if you care to come and dine alone with me at seven-thirty, I shall be ever so happy to have you. Then we can go on to the Winter Palace together for the state reception."

"Nothing would make me happier," I answered, pressing her hand. After a moment's small talk I left the

box, meeting one of the Grand Dukes just as I left. He waved me a salutation, saying: "All Russia worships at the shrine of *la veuve!*"

I did not see her again until the following evening. I arrived at her palace in the Quai de la Cour punctually at fifteen minutes past seven. Her dinner was invariably served at seven-thirty, and if those whom she invited were not on time it made little or no difference to her.

"There is no one for whom I would ruin my dinner," she told a Serène Highness from Germany one night. He had arrived late, accustomed to having dinners wait for his appearance. The German was indignant, and vowed that he would never again dine at "that woman's." He did not, for another invitation was never extended him, though he begged my good offices to secure him one.

I entered the small drawing-room where Madame Alexander always received her more intimate friends. She was waiting. From the sable aigrette that finished her hairdressing to the toe of her slipper she was in black—dead, lustreless black. Her gown was of velvet, made on simple lines, and without a relieving bit of lace or chiffon. Not a jewel shed its light nor a flower tempted a trite comparison. Her face was white and cold, and her lips, though poppy-red, were like the dead color on a painter's palette. I bowed to kiss her gloved hand, and thrilled with the knowledge that it was cold, even through her glove.

She smiled at the salute—a smile that was a travesty of her usual happy laugh—hard, cynical, cold and worldly. It was as if she said: "Down, man; tell me that you love me, and in your heart confess that my millions are more to you than the love of my heart."

"Why so gloomily gowned to-night?" I asked, as we sat at dinner in the vast dining-hall.

"I have wearied of color," she responded.

"And no gems," I said, idly.

"No gems," she answered, slowly, her eyes looking into mine.

"You are to go thus to the Winter Palace, without a bit of color or a jewel?" I asked, wondering what strange fancy had come to her.

"I shall make no change," she responded, and smiled at me wickedly across her wineglass. Her mood had changed. She was no longer weary-eyed and weary-voiced. Her smile was a challenge. It was tender, sensuous. It dared me to tell her of my love for her; it dared me to taste the glory of her kisses. But I resisted, and forced myself to talk of other things—the excellence of a new painter's work, the charm of an old writer's verses, the brilliancy of the season, the return of my mother, Count Antoieff's card scandal, and a hundred and one other things. But that maddening, thrilling smile never left her lips. "Come and kiss me while you may," they said.

At last we rose from the table and passed through splendid apartments to a little music-room that overlooked the Quai. She took her place at the piano without my request, which we both knew was unnecessary. Her name, Sarah, was Eastern, and when she played the tender melodies of the East, with their strange, subtle under-chord of tenderness and sorrow, I conceived her to be a reincarnation of some long-dead Oriental empress. Soon a change came to her playing, and her voice—a small, carefully trained voice—rose in some of those strange airs that the Russ peasants know; the songs that have no hope, no joy or glory in them, the songs of an ineffable misery and apathy. I left my chair and went to her. I seized her hands in mine. "You shall not, you must not, sing those songs!" I cried.

"Why?" she asked, making no effort to take her hands from mine.

"Because they are the songs of unhappiness, of misery, of hopelessness!" I answered.

"Then why should I not sing them?" she demanded, her white throat quivering. "I have known

unhappiness, misery and hopelessness; aye, I know them even now."

"You should sing only the songs of love, of life and of happiness," I said. "As to your misery and hopelessness, let me take them on my shoulders, and let me prove to you the strength of my love." She made no answer, but lifted her lips to me in a way no man could mistake.

After a moment, as I was about to speak, she laid a finger on my lips. "You must say nothing," she whispered. "I have much to tell you tonight," she continued, after a moment's silence, "but it is now time for us to go to the palace. Is there not some secluded spot there where we can talk?"

"Yes," I answered, remembering a delightful little room apart from the state apartments not easy of access.

Our drive to the palace was in silence; there was nothing for either of us to say just then, though we both knew that in the hours to come there would be much to say.

The crowded chambers of the great palace presented a sight not to be equaled in splendor by any court of the world. There was the usual flash of gems and glitter of orders; the usual display of beautiful arms and necks and of equally hideous ones; the usual smiling, bowing, hypocritical crowd. Among them all passed and repassed the tall, slender figure of the American widow, distinguished in her simple gown of black. A French diplomat bowed to her.

"Ah, madame, why do you return to mourning?" he asked.

"Because of something that is to happen," she answered, coldly, and passed on.

Not long after that we separated, going our own ways. It was probably two hours before we met again to speak, though we saw each other across spaces in the throngs that filled the vast apartments. At last, her lips smiling in a weary fashion, she came to me and said:

"Now, Dmitri Ivanovitch, take me where we may have our talk."

Eagerly I led the way through the crowded chambers to the corridor that terminated in a small suite of apartments which had no definite use. They were dimly lighted and reposeful. My companion sank wearily on a sofa with what seemed to me divine grace. I drew a cushioned footstool near her and seated myself at her feet. I took one of her hands in mine—the apartment was so secluded that I had no reason to fear an intruder.

I caressed the hand I held. She smiled. Then she leaned over and kissed me, calling me endearing names. After a few moments she straightened up from the reclining position in which she sat. An eager, feverish light came into her eyes. Her cheeks grew flushed beyond their ordinary exquisite color. Then she spoke.

"There is that which I must tell you, Dmitri Ivanovitch," she said.

I bowed my head and pressed my cheek to her hand.

"First, I am not an American, but a Russian."

I raised my head. "Then you are dearer and nearer than ever to me," I said, "for I love my country and its people."

"Secondly," she went on, in a strained, unnatural voice, "I am a Russian Jew."

I sprang to my feet, throwing my arms around her. I laughed.

"I see, beloved," I cried, "that you are but testing my love—don't try any more. I love you, and you are dearer to me than anyone else in all the world, no matter what absurd test you may put me to."

She suffered my embrace indifferently.

"I was born here in Petersburg," she went on, as if I had said nothing, "in a squalid, dirty street, in a squalid, dirty house. Everything around me was noisome and poverty-stricken. The walls of the cedar house were damp, often wet; vermin invested them, and only the lowest and most miserable of the metropolis shrank home there at night. You,

the aristocrat, have never even seen that portion of the city. My father, one of the despised Jews, was a tailor in a small shop not far from us. His wages were pitiful, and I can remember many a time when we were without tea, or bread, or meat. Indeed, meat was a rare luxury with us. My father was a man of some little education, which he wasted in studying the Talmud and the books on Judaism. At nights strange men, intimate friends of his, would come and discuss wonderful points of religion with him, while I, a girl of ten, lay on a pallet in one corner of the room and watched them. My mother was shrewish. She would pour invectives on the heads of these students of the Talmud. She berated my father because he did not use his education as an under clerk in some mercantile establishment. When I was eleven I was placed at work in a factory, where the meagre sum I earned helped defray the expenses of our living. Things went from bad to worse. My father neglected his tailoring to devote himself to the study of his beloved books. Then the police became suspicious, and we were watched. My father was suspected of being a political plotter. He was not; nothing was further from his dear, muddled old brain.

"Then he was discharged from his position. He could not obtain another place. The support of the family fell on me. I had grown older in the meantime. I was twelve. I rebelled against the hardness of life. My days were miserable and my nights joyless. Sometimes, when work was scarce at the factory, I would walk long, weary blocks to reach the glittering and brilliant Nevsky Prospekt. I would walk slowly along, watching the *droshkies* as they passed, filled with happy, laughing occupants. Young officers, resplendent in their uniforms, brushed by and never noticed the slender child who stood in her ragged clothes and watched them. I would steal eagerly to the shop windows, gazing in at the wonderful displays. At last, when the

dusk came to the sky, I would creep home to our miserable room, to lie on my pallet with my whole soul filled with hunger for the things which were not for me, the daughter of a Jew. But when sleep came, I would dream glorious, roseate dreams, in which the young officers whom I had seen on the Nevsky spoke to me as they did to the handsomely attired young women who also passed up and down the Prospekt. In these dreams I wore beautiful clothes and jewels from the glittering displays I had seen in the jewelers' windows."

She ceased for a second, and I held her closer to me. Then she went on:

"At last a change came. My mother's brother, a young, energetic man, had gone to America years before. He had become a successful vender of second-hand clothes in New York. Fond of his only sister, whom he remembered as a young and fairly pretty woman, he sent us enough money to enable us to join him in America. My mother was in raptures. My father solemnly knelt and gave thanks to the Lord of Hosts. And I—I left the factory, paid one last, lingering visit to the Nevsky Prospekt, and we started on the long journey to America.

"Never shall I forget that journey. Crowded into the steerage of the steamer were hundreds of emigrants. Coarse, repulsive and vulgar, they formed a spectacle horrible in the extreme. Foul imprecations sounded continually in my ears, and shameless actions covered my cheeks with blushes. It was a nightmare of the greatest horror. Often the saloon passengers would come and look at us in the same manner that they might go to a menagerie and stare at the beasts.

"At last we reached New York. We were crowded like sheep into the emigrant office. The officials pushed us here and shoved us there. No one gave any thought to our comfort. Strange peoples from strange lands were also there. At last my uncle came to claim us. He was startled. He did not know his sister. The pic-

ture he had carried with him for years was that of a young, good-looking woman. She who greeted him was old, the stamp of misery and privation unmistakably on her face. He took us to his home, three small rooms above his clothing store. They were clean and neat, but not what I had dreamed of. His letters had been filled with assurances of his success. I had expected a house, handsome like those outside of which I had dreamed in far-off Petersburg. The street where my uncle carried on his business was noisome and dirty, but the house was substantial, and, unlike the old house in Petersburg, which was frequently inundated by the rising of the Neva, was also dry. We had coarse, substantial food in plenty. I was sent to a free school after I had mastered the rudiments of the English language. My father obtained employment in a tailoring establishment, for his work with the needle was of the finest. He came to be considered of importance in the synagogue, owing to his learning in the Talmud. On the Sabbath we went with him to the services. After a while my uncle lent my father enough money to start a tailoring place of his own. It was small, in a basement; and at first only cleaning, repairing and pressing were given him. But after a while he began to make clothes.

"At that time I was sixteen, but not the sixteen of the average Jewish girl. I was undeveloped, slender, and they called me ugly. The other girls of my age had their 'young men,' but no young man ever looked at me with eyes of admiration. Nor did I desire it. I had my dream officers from the Nevsky, with their handsome faces and glittering uniforms. I told no one of my dreams. I could not bear to be laughed at, and I knew that laughter would greet me if I told of my dreams.

"Two more years went by. I was eighteen. I began to develop. My sallow skin became clear and richly colored. My hair was the admiration of all the girls I knew. My figure rounded out. At last they called me

the most beautiful girl at the synagogue. I helped my father in his work at the tailoring shop, and the young men came there often. I had several offers of marriage, which, to the consternation of my parents, I refused. But my uncle was pleased. 'Let her wait,' he said, 'and her beauty will gain her a husband different from these who have offered themselves. He will be a great man—a gentleman.'

"Yet another year passed, and my parents thought me doomed to be an old maid. But I took care that my beauty should not fade. On Sundays, and whenever I had a spare moment, I would go out into the suburbs and walk. The fresh, sweet air, so unlike the crowded downtown, and the vigorous exercise, kept the roses in my cheeks and the elasticity in my steps. With a contemptuous amusement I watched the girls of my own age fade and break from comeliness into hideousness, borne down by the misery of matrimony and motherhood.

"Then, drawn by the local fame I had acquired, a man came into the street from the upper part of town. He was well dressed and handsome. He had some work for my father to do, so he said, and gave him the address of an apartment house to which my father was to send for some clothes that needed cleaning and pressing. The man came often. I grew to dream of him; he seemed the American reincarnation of the officers from the Nevsky. I suppose he was very much like the men who had become to me such beautiful ideals. I know them now, the hollow mockery of their lives and their vapid, vulgar brains. But then I imagined them good and noble—the regulation fairy-prince style of men. The fancy was not strange for a girl whose young life was divided between the miserable quarter down by the Neva and the sordid environs of Baxter street.

"Of course, it was the customary story where the man was concerned. He was handsome and wealthy. After a while I went up town to a

dainty apartment. But I went under no illusion. He made plain to me just the position I should occupy. I didn't care. I loved him, and would go with him at any price. He loved me, too, and was more than kind. He had me sent to one of the best convent schools in the city, so that my education became as good as that of any girl I met. He wasn't a good man—he never had been, nor did he claim to be. But he was constant.

"At the end of a year he was taken with a bad cold. His old life told on him, and the cold merged into pneumonia. He became seriously ill, and it was in my apartment that he died. But before his death he gave me the name that I bear to-day, and with it his great fortune. I do not tell you of my misery or my heartache—I cannot do that.

"After his death I went abroad. I traveled. Then my thoughts turned to Russia, and I came here to see the old land once more. Quite a change from the wretched tenement house down by the Neva to the Quai de la Cour! Quite a change from the wretched girl who watched the officers on the Nevsky to the woman whose salutation they are to-day glad to return." She laughed almost hysterically. "*Et voilà tout*," she concluded.

"*Et voilà tout*," I thought. That was all. The woman I loved belonged to the accursed race of the Jews, and had been an unwedded wife. I knew not what to do. I loved her—God help me, I love her even to-day. But a Nordoff, a Nordoff, to wed her! I saw her as my wife. I saw our great happiness. Then I saw the inevitable. Her past life must become known at some future time. I saw myself bowed with shame. I saw her, a countess of the house of Nordoff, pointed out to the world as an adventuress, a woman whose birth and life would debar her from association with anyone of rank or birth. And I saw myself pointed out, as people said: "There is a man who married a woman whose millions salved over her wretched birth and life." It took but a second for all this to pass through

my mind. She sat watching me. I rose.

"Madame," I said, "allow me to escort you to the state apartments."

She, too, rose. Her hands grasped my arm. Her eyes, eloquent with the tragedy of a lifetime, read mine.

"I knew it would be so," she said. "Yet I could not come to you until I had told you all."

When we came to the crowded apartments where the world of Petersburg was assembled, she dropped my arm.

"Good-bye," she said, and disappeared in the throng. I sought her again in vain.

The night was one of misery to me. But my love triumphed. When the morning came I drove to her house in the Quai de la Cour. It was closed. No response came to my continued efforts to gain admission. Later in the day I went again. The house was closed, the door boarded over. I went to the estate agent from whom she had leased the house. Madame Alexander had left Petersburg the night before, he said, and had ordered the house closed. He did not know where she had gone.

For two years I have hunted for her. The whole world has been ransacked. Even the secret police of Russia have hunted for her. No clue or track of her has been found.

This Winter I am to marry a princess of the house of Beloslav. My mother engineered the match. My bride-to-be is not beautiful, but she is enormously wealthy, and is blood-kin to the Imperial family, as her grandfather was an Imperial Grand Duke who contracted a morganatic alliance.

I hate her! . . . I hate her!

I hate myself, because I was weak and a coward where the world's opinion was concerned. I hate myself because I dashed the cup of happiness from my lips. Yet I am Dmitri Ivanovitch Nordoff, a count of Russia, and Gentleman of the Bed Chamber to His Imperial Majesty the Tsar. There are many who envy me, but when they have read this they will no longer do so.

A BIT OF YALE BLUE

AND A PEACEFUL "P. S."

THE cause of it all was a piece of Yale-blue ribbon. The wind, which was blowing at a furious rate, also had something to do with the case. Furthermore, the hot air that came in blasts from a grating in Twenty-third street made a balloon of her skirts, to the delight of a number of small boys and, as a climax to her troubles, she stumbled and nearly fell to her knees in front of Jack Sandford, who was sauntering along in search of a present for his paternal grandmother.

"I beg your pardon!" said the young lady.

"Granted!" replied Jack, promptly. "Are you hurt?"

"Not a bit!" she gasped. "I don't see how—" Then she looked down and saw that one of her silk shoelaces had come untied. "Oh, dear!" she said, impatiently.

"Let me fix it for you!" said Jack, impulsively.

She blushed, and replied, hurriedly: "Oh, no, thank you! It's broken!"

Jack instinctively felt in his pockets for something with which to repair the damage.

"If I only had—oh! I know!" In an instant he had whipped off a piece of blue ribbon he was wearing in celebration of a contest between his college and Princeton that day, and handed it to the charmer in distress.

"Perhaps that will do," he said. "I'm afraid it's rather gaudy, but it will last till you reach home."

"That's lovely!" replied the lady. "Thanks so much!" Then, with a bewitching smile, "I hope your college will win to-day." And she tripped away, leaving Jack with his hat in his hand and his mouth open.

Two years passed, and it was the anniversary of the college competition. Jack had not forgotten his romantic adventure. He had fallen in love a hundred times since, but he still kept a corner of his heart for the girl with the blue ribbon. He had unfortunately forgotten what her features were like, but he labored under an extremely improbable hope that some day he should meet her again.

This hope was in his mind when he wended his way to the house of his latest conquest. It so happened—Jack confessed he didn't know how—that before the day was over he found himself engaged to the daughter of his hostess. It might have been the excitement he experienced over the fact that his college proved victorious, or it might have been the knowledge that the young lady was possessed of a sum that would afford him a substantial competence for the rest of his natural life, which brought him to a declaration of his affection; but certain it was that at the hour of ten o'clock his life contract was made.

Confidence begat confidence, and in the exhilaration of the occasion he related to his inamorata his experience with the blue-ribbon lady.

"I thought at the time," he sighed, "I should never marry anyone but her!"

A roguish twinkle came into her eyes, and she whispered, "Then it was you!"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Why, you're my hero! Wait a minute." And she ran out of the room, leaving Jack somewhat mystified. In five minutes she returned, with her hands behind her.

"Do you think you would know the shoe if you saw it again?"

Jack was a trifle doubtful, but said he thought he would. She produced a dainty but dusty old shoe and handed it to him.

"Does this look anything like it?"

There in the eyelets was a piece of Yale-blue ribbon! Jack started.

"You were that girl?"

"I suppose so. It looks like it."

"Then the Yale-blue tie—"

"Binds you to me!"

They were married, but whether they lived happily ever afterward his-

tory deponeth not. However, there was one incident during the honeymoon which is worth recording.

"Jack, dear," said the blushing bride, "you remember that affair about the Yale-blue ribbon?"

Jack said he remembered.

"Well, what I told you wasn't true."

Jack murmured, sleepily, "I knew it!"

P. S.—And they were both satisfied.

ERNEST GEORGE.



ASPIRATION

MY soul seeks for esthetic food;
My joy in life is to pursue
The True, the Beautiful, the Good—
That, dear, is why I come to you.

I often feel a deep dejection
The highest is to me denied,
And yet I know I'm near perfection—
When I am sitting by your side.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.



MAKING THE HEART FONDER

SHE—They say she married him to get rid of him.

HE—It must be true. I understand she doesn't kick at paying his club dues.



REMOVED THE CAUSE

RIVERS (*a neighbor*)—Your dog doesn't howl any more. Is he dead?
BRIDGES—No; I had the piano tuned.



MIGHT BE MISTAKEN

HE—You are the only girl I ever loved.

SHE—Don't be too sure about it. You haven't landed me yet.

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. IV

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No. 3

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PAPA BOUCHARD

By Molly Elliot Seawell

ON a certain day in June, 1900, a cataclysm occurred in the quiet apartment of Mademoiselle Céleste Bouchard, in the Rue Clarisse, the quietest street in the quietest part of Paris. This cataclysm consisted of the simultaneous departure, or rather the levanting, of the entire masculine element in the excellent old lady's household. And this masculine element had been so admirably trained! Monsieur Paul Bouchard, in particular, ten years his sister's junior, was reckoned a model man. Mademoiselle could truly say that during his fifty-four years of life he had never, until then, given her a moment's anxiety. All the elderly ladies of the Bouchards' acquaintance pointed with admiration to Monsieur Paul.

"Look!" they said, "such a good brother! Mademoiselle boasts that although he is fifty-four years of age he is still as obedient to her as he was at fifteen. So prosperous and respected as an advocate, too!" And all these ladies sighed because they had not succeeded in petticoating a brother or a husband as Mademoiselle Bouchard had petticoated the prosperous and respected Monsieur Paul Bouchard.

Pierre, the husband of Élise, Mademoiselle Bouchard's maid for thirty years, was as well disciplined as his master, for he was Monsieur Paul's valet. He had never had a will of his own since the day, thirty years before, when Élise had sworn before the altar to love, honor and obey him.

The third masculine creature in the dovecote of the Rue Clarisse was the parrot, Pierrot. Nobody knew exactly how old Pierrot was, but he was sup-

posed to have arrived at years of discretion. Mademoiselle had spent a dozen patient years in curing Pierrot of a propensity to bad language, and had taught him a great variety of moral maxims that made him a model bird, as Monsieur Bouchard was a model man and Pierre a model servant. It is true that Léontine de Meneval, Monsieur Paul's ward, married to a handsome scapegrace captain of artillery, had amused herself with teaching the bird a number of phrases, such as "Bad boy Bouchard" and others reflecting on "Papa Bouchard," as she called him. And Pierrot had picked up these naughty expressions with astonishing quickness. But Léontine had always been regarded as incorrigible by her guardian and his sister, although they really loved her, and since her marriage she had become gayer, merrier and more irresponsible than ever. This deterioration both Monsieur and Mademoiselle Bouchard laid at the door of her husband, Captain de Meneval, with his laughing eyes and devil-may-care manner; with whom, however, aside from these characteristics, not the slightest fault could be found. He was devoted to Léontine, and if the two chose to lead a life as merry and unreflecting as that of the birds in the shadowy forests, nobody could stop them. Papa Bouchard—as the artillery captain had the impudence to call him—did, it is true, keep a tight hand on Léontine's fortune, and would allow her only half her income, at which Léontine grumbled and incited Captain de Meneval to grumble, too. But Papa Bouchard, having full power as trustee, met their complaints and protests with a propo-

sition to cut down their allowance to one-fourth of their income, at which the two young people grew frightened and desisted.

Now, there dwells in every masculine breast a germ of lawlessness that no discipline ever invented can wholly kill. Man or parrot, it is the same. After having been brought up in the way he should go, he longs to go it. Such was the case with Pierrot, with Pierre and with Monsieur Bouchard.

It was the bird that first made a dash for liberty. After ten years of irreproachable conduct, Pierrot, on that June morning, suddenly jumped from the balcony, where he had been walking the railing in the most sedate manner, and scurried off in the direction of the Folies Bergères, the Moulin Rouge, and the very gayest quarter of Paris.

Monsieur Bouchard was sitting on the balcony at the time. He was rather younger looking, with his clean-shaven face and wiry figure, than most men of his age, but thanks to Mademoiselle Céleste, he patronized the same tailors that had made for his father and his grandfather. Their cut and style indicated that they had been tailors to Cardinal Richelieu and others of that time, and they dressed Monsieur Bouchard in coats and trousers and waistcoats of the pliocene age of tailoring. As for his hats, they might have been dug out of Pompeii for any modernity they had, and the result was that Monsieur Bouchard's back and legs looked about seventy-five, while his face looked little more than forty.

Instead of giving the alarm when Pierrot trotted gaily off, Monsieur Bouchard felt a strange thrill of sympathy with the runaway.

"Poor devil!" thought he. "No doubt he is sick of the Rue Clarisse—tired of the moral maxims—wary of the whole business. He isn't so young as he was, but there's a good deal of life in him still—" Pierrot was just scampering round the corner—"and he wants to see life."

"There is a psychologic moment for everything," so Otto von Bis-

marck said. The parrot's escape made a psychologic moment for Monsieur Bouchard, and quietly putting on his hat, and telling Mademoiselle Bouchard that he was going to a meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians at St. Germain, and afterward for a stroll through the museum in the town, made straight for a street in the neighborhood of the Champs Elysées. He remembered seeing in that quarter a handsome new apartment house lately finished and thoroughly modern. He had for curiosity's sake entered it. He had seen furnished apartments so bright, so light, so cheery, so merry that he longed to establish himself there. He had gone back once, twice, thrice, each time more infatuated with the place. To-day he walked in, selected a vacant apartment, and in ten minutes had taken a lease of it for a year.

And then he had to go back to the Rue Clarisse to tell about it.

Of course, he had not thrown off the yoke of thirty years without secret alarms, agitations and palpitations. He walked up and down the Rue Clarisse twice, his heart thumping loudly against his ribs, before he could screw up resolution to enter. He was nerved, however, by the recollection of the apartment he had just seen. It had been given up the day before by a young journalist, who had left various souvenirs of a very pleasant life there. The street was such a bustling, noisy street—and the Rue Clarisse was so quiet, so quiet! In the new street there were two music halls in full view and generally in full blast, gay restaurants blazing with lights, where all sorts of delicious, indigestible things to eat were to be had, and such an atmosphere of jollity and movement! Monsieur Bouchard quivered with delight like a schoolboy as he thought of it, and so he marched in to take his life in his hand while breaking the news to his sister Céleste.

Mademoiselle Bouchard, a small, prim, devoted, affectionate, obstinate creature, was sitting in the drawing-room, bemoaning with Élise the loss

of Pierrot. Élise, a hard-featured, hard-working creature, had such a profound contempt for the other sex that it was a wonder she ever brought herself to marry one of them. She was saying to Mademoiselle Bouchard:

"Depend on it, Mademoiselle, that ungrateful Pierrot will never come back of his own accord. If he had been a she-bird, now—but Pierrot is like the rest of his sex. It's in them to run away, and run away they will."

"He has had a quiet, peaceful home in the Rue Clarisse for seventeen years," wailed poor Mademoiselle Bouchard.

"That's reason enough for him to run away. What does he care about a quiet, peaceful home? He wants to be strutting around in some restaurant, drinking and swearing and turning night into day. They're all like that. My Pierre, now, is just as ready to run away as was Pierrot, but I shall keep an eye on *him*."

And then Monsieur Bouchard walked in, with an affectation of ease and debonairness, and told about the apartment near the Champs Elysées, whereat it seemed to poor Mademoiselle Céleste as if the Louvre had moved itself over into the Bois de Boulogne and the Seine had suddenly begun to flow backward. Of course, Monsieur Bouchard had arranged a plausible tale by which his hegira was to appear the most natural and laudable thing in the world. Most men are inventive enough in the matter of personal justification. But it is one thing to make up and tell a plausible tale, and another to get that tale believed. Élise openly sniffed at the theory advanced by Monsieur Bouchard that it was absolutely necessary for him to live nearer the courts. Also, that he was really inspired by a desire to save Mademoiselle the annoyance of clients coming and going.

"You remember, my dear Céleste, you complained of Captain de Meneval the last time he was here. You said he talked and laughed so

much, and chucked Élise under the chin—"

"But that was a trifle; you know there's no real harm done," protested Mademoiselle Bouchard.

"Why? Because I won't let him," said Monsieur Bouchard, with the determined air a man assumes when he wishes to impress a woman with a great notion of the power he holds over another man. "It is because he has to deal with *me*—a man born with his shirt on, as the peasants say. Otherwise there might be harm done. De Meneval is very saucy. When I reminded him the other day of the promise I exacted from him when he married Léontine, that he wouldn't go into debt, the fellow grinned and said he was in love with Léontine, and would have promised to eat his grandmother if I had made that a condition."

"But in reference to this strange notion of yours about taking an apartment at your time of life—"

"That's just it, my dear," cried Monsieur Bouchard. "I am too old *not* to have a separate establishment."

"Too old!" cried Mademoiselle, who had never ceased to regard the model Monsieur Bouchard as a wild sprig of flamboyant youth; "you mean too young!"

Monsieur Bouchard was tickled. What gentleman of fifty-four is not pleased at the assumption that he is merely a colt, after all?

Mademoiselle Bouchard anxiously scrutinized her brother. There was a lawless gleam in his eye—an indefinable something that is revealed when a man has the bit between his teeth and does not mean to let it go. Mademoiselle, good, innocent soul, was not devoid of sense, and she saw her only game was to play for time.

"Very well, Paul. If you *will* desert the Rue Clarisse, I will look about and get you an apartment near by, and I will let you have Pierre—"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Monsieur Bouchard, hastily. He had no mind to have a domestic Vidocq in his new quarters. "I couldn't think of robbing you of Pierre. Thirty years you

have had him. You could not get on without him."

"Yes, I could."

"I can't accept the sacrifice."

"I make it cheerfully for your sake."

"It would be cruel to Pierre."

"He will make the sacrifice."

"That he will," interrupted Élise, with the freedom of an old servant.

"He will caper at the notion of leaving the Rue Clarisse for some wild, dissipated place such as Monsieur Paul has selected."

"Monsieur Paul has not selected a place, Élise," replied Mademoiselle, with severity.

"But—but I have, my dear Céleste. It is No. 25 Rue Bassano. I have taken it for a year. In fact, the van is coming to-day for my personal belongings. Pierre will see to them. And, my dear, I have a busy day before me. I am due at the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians at St. Germain at one o'clock, and I can barely make the train. Afterward I shall spend some instructive hours in the museum—I shall see you to-morrow—" and Monsieur Bouchard literally ran out of the room.

"There he goes!" apostrophized Élise to Mademoiselle Céleste, who was almost in tears. "That's the way Pierrot scampered off, and Pierre wants only half a wink to run off, too, to the Rue Bassano."

"Élise," cried Mademoiselle, "you are most unjust, and your suspicions of Pierre will be disproved. Ring the bell."

Pierre appeared.

He was about Monsieur Bouchard's age, height and size—medium in all respects—clean shaven, like his master, and wore a cast-off suit of Monsieur Bouchard's, as it was the morning and his livery was religiously saved for the afternoon. He was, in short, a very good imitation of Monsieur Bouchard.

Mademoiselle Bouchard stated the case to him, carefully giving Monsieur Paul's bogus reasons.

"The Rue Bassano is a very gay and noisy place, Pierre, as you know,

with a great many theatres and restaurants about, and much passing to and fro. It will be a change from the Rue Clarisse."

"Mademoiselle, I know it," Pierre replied, showing the whites of his eyes. "I would much rather remain in this decent, quiet street."

Mademoiselle turned to Élise with an I-told-you-so air, and said, "No doubt you would, Pierre—a man of your excellent character."

"Yes, Mademoiselle. The theatres and music halls must be very objectionable—and the restaurants. I suppose the waiters would laugh at me when I went to fetch Monsieur's dinner of boiled mutton and rice."

"Yes; but if it were your duty to go with Monsieur?"

"Duty, Mademoiselle, has ever been a sacred word with me. Though but a servant, I have always revered my duty," replied the virtuous Pierre. He backed and filled for some time longer, as servants commonly do—and as some of their masters and mistresses do sometimes—but finally, in response to Mademoiselle Bouchard's pleading that he would not desert Monsieur Bouchard at this critical moment in his career, consented to brave the dangers of the gay Rue Bassano. But when Mademoiselle hinted at the horrid possibility that Monsieur Bouchard might be beguiled into sowing a late crop of wild oats in the Rue Bassano, suddenly a grin flashed for a moment on Pierre's stolid countenance—flashed and disappeared so instantly that Mademoiselle Bouchard was not sure he grinned at all. If he did, however, it must have been at the notion that the staid, the correct Monsieur Bouchard could ever sow wild oats. Mademoiselle Céleste blushed faintly at the thought that she reckoned such a thing possible.

Pierre then backed out of the door, wiping two imaginary tears from his eyes. Once outside with the door shut, this miscreant did a very strange thing. He stood on one leg, whirled around with the greatest agility for his years, and softly whispered, "Houp-la!"

That very day came the moving. The van arrived, and Monsieur Bouchard's books, papers and clothes were put into it by Pierre, who seemed to be in the deepest dejection. Mademoiselle gave him minute and tearful directions about Monsieur Paul's diet, exercise and clothing. He was to see that Monsieur Paul kept regular hours, and was to report in the Rue Clarisse the smallest infraction of the rules of living which might occur in the Rue Bassano, and Pierre promised with a fervor and glibness that would have excited the suspicions of anyone less kindly and simple-minded than good old Mademoiselle. He did indeed awaken a host of doubts in the mind of his faithful Élise, who had not been married for thirty years without finding out a few things about men. And when he wept at telling her good-bye for a single day, she told him not to be shedding any of those crocodile tears around her.

Pierre, mounted on the van that carried away Monsieur Bouchard's belongings, drove off, looking as melancholy as he could; but as soon as he turned the corner he began whistling so merrily that the driver asked him if his uncle hadn't died and left him some money.

When the Rue Bassano was reached Pierre jumped down and skipped up stairs with the agility of twenty instead of fifty. He was as charmed with Monsieur's new apartment as Monsieur himself had been. It was so intensely modern. Light everywhere—all sorts of new-fashioned conveniences—nothing in the least like the dismal old Rue Clarisse. And the view from the windows—so very gay! And the noise—so delicious, so intoxicatingly interesting! Pierre could not refrain from hanging out of the window about half the time he was supposed to be at work. He whistled, sang, and even danced in the exuberance of his delight. The last tenant—a very jolly young journalist—had left, as Monsieur Bouchard had noted, some souvenirs on the walls in the shape of gaudy posters and brilliant chromos of ballet girls.

These Pierre might be expected to remove when he began to hang on the walls the severely classic pictures that constituted Monsieur Bouchard's collection of art. But Pierre seemed to know by clairvoyance Monsieur Bouchard's latent tastes. He hung "The Coliseum by Moonlight"—a very fine etching—immediately under a red-and-gold young lady who was making a quarter of six with her dainty, uplifted toe. "Socrates and His Pupils" were put where they could get an admirable view of another red-and-gold young lady who was making six o'clock precisely. "Kittens at Play"—a great favorite of Mademoiselle's—was side by side with a picture of Courier, who won the Grand Prix that year, and a very noble portrait of President Loubet was placed next a cut of a celebrated English prize fighter, stripped for the ring. The remainder of the things were neatly arranged; the *concierge*, who was to supply Monsieur Bouchard's meals, was interviewed, and an appetizing dinner ordered. Then Pierre, taking possession of the evening newspaper and also of a very comfortable chair by the window, awaited Monsieur Bouchard's arrival.

It was a charming evening in the middle of June, and still broad daylight at seven o'clock. But Pierre, presently lighting a lamp and drawing the shades, gave the apartment a homelike and inviting aspect.

Just as the clock struck seven Monsieur Bouchard's step was heard on the stair. Seven o'clock had been Monsieur Bouchard's hour of coming home since he was fifteen years old, and he had never varied from it three minutes in thirty-seven years. He entered the drawing-room with a new and jovial air, but when he saw Pierre his countenance turned as black as a thundercloud.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, curtly.

"I came, Monsieur, by Mademoiselle's orders," civilly replied Pierre.

"Mademoiselle's orders" was still a phrase to conjure by with Monsieur Bouchard. When the yoke of forty

years is thrown off there is still a feeling as if it were bearing on the neck. Monsieur Bouchard crossly threw his gloves on the table and asked for his dinner.

"It will be here in five minutes, Monsieur," replied Pierre. "Will not Monsieur look about the apartment and see if I have arranged things to suit him? The pictures, for example?"

Monsieur, still sulky, rose, and the first thing his eye fell on was the prize fighter's portrait under President Loubet's.

"This is intolerable!" he said, indignantly. "Why didn't you take this prize-fighting daub down?"

"Because," readily responded Pierre, "the place where it was would be marked on the wall; and besides, I did not like to take the liberty without Monsieur's permission."

Monsieur Bouchard passed on to the next picture, that of the hero of the Grand Prix. He liked horses—in pictures, that is—and really found Courier more to his taste than "Kittens at Play." His countenance cleared, and when Pierre gravely directed him to the young lady poised on one toe and reaching skyward with the other, a faint smile actually appeared on Monsieur Bouchard's face. Then, his eye falling on the other young lady who was making six o'clock, every wrinkle on his forehead smoothed out, his mouth came open like a rat trap, and he involuntarily assumed an attitude of pleased contemplation, with his hands under his coat tails.

Suddenly, however, it flashed on him that Mademoiselle Bouchard's paid detective, in the person of Pierre, was eyeing him, and with the quickness of thought Monsieur Bouchard's appreciative smile gave way to a portentous frown, and turning to Pierre, he said, sternly:

"Take this thing away! It is reprehensible both in art and morals! I can't have it here!"

But, wonder of wonders! there stood Pierre, his mouth wide open in a silent guffaw, his left eye nearly

closed. Was it possible that he was daring to wink at his master? Pierre, however, pretty soon solved the situation by putting his finger on the side of his nose—a shocking familiarity—and saying, roguishly:

"Ah, sir, I have something to say to you. I was forced, yes, actually driven, from the decorous quiet of the Rue Clarisse and the company of Mademoiselle Bouchard and my worthy Elise and the cats, to this gay locality by my solicitude for Monsieur. That is to say, Mademoiselle thinks I was. One thing is certain—I was sent here to take care of Monsieur. Well, it depends entirely on Monsieur how I take care of him. Do you understand, sir?"

"N—n—not exactly." Monsieur Bouchard was a little frightened. Having Pierre to mount guard over him seemed destructive of the harmless liberty and mild gaiety he had promised himself in the Rue Bassano.

"Just this, sir. My wife, I have reason to know, expects Monsieur to watch me and report to her. Mademoiselle expects me to watch Monsieur and report to *her*. Now, what prevents us from each giving a good account of the other, and meanwhile doing as we please?"

Monsieur for a moment looked indignant at this impudent proposition, coming, too, as it did, from a servant whom he had known as the pattern of decorum for thirty years. But only for a moment. Was it strange, after all, that thirty years of the Rue Clarisse had bred a spirit of revolt in this hitherto obedient husband and submissive servant?

Pierre, seeing evidences of yielding on the part of Monsieur, proceeded to clinch the matter.

"You see, sir, I found out you were looking at this apartment. If I had told Mademoiselle what I knew about it there'd have been a pretty kettle of fish. I doubt if Monsieur would have got away from the Rue Clarisse alive. But I didn't. I concluded the Rue Bassano was a very pleasant place to live in. I like the lively tunes they play at the music

hall across the street, and that theatre round the corner is convenient. So I kept as dumb as an oyster, and here we are, sir, and if we don't have a livelier time here than we did in the Rue Clarisse it will be Monsieur's fault, not mine."

Monsieur met this outrageous speech by saying, "You are the most impudent, scandalous, scheming, hypocritical rascal I ever met—"

Pierre just then heard sounds in the little lobby which he understood. He ran out and returned with a tray, which he placed on the table, already laid for one. Then, arranging the dishes with a great flourish, he invited Monsieur Bouchard to take his place at the table. Monsieur complied. The first course was oysters—at three francs the dozen. Then there was turtle soup; duckling *à la Bordelaise*, deviled lobster—both of which were forbidden in the Rue Clarisse, because Monsieur Bouchard at the age of seven had been made ill by them—and a bottle of champagne, a wine that Mademoiselle had always told her brother was poison to every member of his family.

But Monsieur Bouchard seemed to forget all about this. He ate and drank these things as if he had forgotten all his painful experiences of forty-five years before and as if he had been brought up on champagne.

It was rather pleasant—this first quaff of liberty—having what he liked to eat and drink, and even to wear. He privately determined before finishing his dinner that he would get a new tailor next day and have some clothes made in the latest fashion.

"Have you found out the names of any persons in the house?" asked Monsieur after dinner, lighting a cigar. It was his second; in the Rue Clarisse he was limited to one.

"No one at all, sir," replied that double-dyed villain, Pierre. "It isn't judicious to know all sorts of people. I intend to forget some I know."

Monsieur Bouchard turned in his chair and looked at Pierre; the fellow really seemed changed into another

man from what he had been for thirty years. But to Monsieur Bouchard the change was not displeasing. He felt a bond between himself and Pierre, stronger in the last half-hour than in the thirty years they had been master and man. They exchanged looks—it might even be said winks—and Monsieur Bouchard poured out another glass of champagne—his third. And when dinner was over he was in that state of exhilaration which the sense of liberty newly acquired always brings.

"Monsieur won't want me any more to-night?" asked Pierre.

"No," replied Monsieur Bouchard, "but be sure to be here at—" he meant to say at ten o'clock that night, but changed his mind and said, "seven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Certainly, sir," answered Pierre. "I expect to be home and in bed before three."

And he said this with such a debonair manner that Monsieur Bouchard was secretly charmed, and privately determined to acquire something of the same tone.

Pierre gone, Monsieur Bouchard made himself comfortable in an easy-chair and began toying with a fourth cigar. How agreeable were these modern apartments, after all!—everything furnished, every want anticipated—all a tenant had to do was to walk in and hang up his hat. Then his thoughts wandered to that very pretty woman who had traveled in the same train with him that day to St. Germain, and the day before to Verneuil, whither he had gone to look after some property of Léontine's. Madame Vernet was her name—it was on her traveling bag—and she was a widow—that much had leaked out ten seconds after he met her. But she was so very demure, so modest, not to say bashful, that she seemed more like a nun than a widow. And so timid—everything frightened her. She trembled when the guard asked her for her ticket, and clung quite desperately to Monsieur Bouchard's arm in the station at Verneuil. She had expected her aunt and uncle to

meet her, and when they were not to be found, blushingly accepted Monsieur Bouchard's services in getting a cab. And that day, on stepping into the railway carriage to go to St. Germain, there was the dear little diffident thing again. She was charmed to see her friend of the day before, and explained that she was to spend the day with another uncle and aunt she had living at St. Germain. Knowing her inability to care for herself in a crowd, Monsieur Bouchard had meant to put her into a cab, as he had done the day before. But just as the train stopped he was seized by a couple of snuffy old antiquarians and hustled off by them before he could even offer to take charge of the quiet, the retiring, the clinging and helpless Madame Vernet.

Monsieur Bouchard lay back in his chair recalling her prim but pretty gray gown, her fleecy veil of gray gauze, that covered but did not conceal her charming features, and her extremely natty boots. He could not for the life of him remember whether he had mentioned to her on their first meeting that he was going to St. Germain next day. While he was cogitating this point he was rudely disturbed by the opening of the door, and Captain de Meneval walked in briskly.

Now this good-looking captain of artillery, who had married Monsieur Bouchard's ward, Léontine, was not exactly to Monsieur's taste. It is true he had never been able to find out anything to de Meneval's discredit—and he had looked pretty closely into the captain's affairs at the time of Léontine's marriage. As for Léontine herself, she was devoted to her captain and always represented him as being the kindest as well as the most agreeable of husbands. True, he was always complaining about the modest income that Papa Bouchard allowed them, but Léontine herself was ever doing that, and urged de Meneval on in his complaints. Monsieur Bouchard was a little annoyed at de Meneval's entrance, especially as the artillery captain had adopted a *hail-fellow-well-met* air, highly objectionable on

the part of a man toward another man who practically holds the purse-strings for number one.

Therefore, Monsieur Bouchard rather stiffly gave Captain de Meneval three fingers and offered him a chair.

"Changed your quarters, eh?" said de Meneval, looking about him. "Found the Rue Clarisse rather slow, and came off here where you can be your own man, so to speak?"

"I was not actuated by any such motive," coldly replied Monsieur Bouchard. "I came here because the rooms I had in the Rue Clarisse were cramped, and I needed to have more room, as well as to be in a more convenient quarter of Paris."

De Meneval's bright eyes had been traveling round the walls, and Monsieur Bouchard remembered, with cold chills running up and down his back, his predecessor's pictures so indiscreetly left hanging by Pierre. A shout of laughter from de Meneval, and a pointing of his stick toward the red-and-gold young ladies, showed Monsieur Bouchard that his apprehensions were not unfounded.

"Is that your selection, Papa Bouchard?" cried the reprobate captain. "Never saw them before—you must have kept them in hiding in the Rue Clarisse. I'll tell Léontine," and the captain laughed loudly.

He had a great haw-haw of a laugh that had always been particularly annoying to Monsieur Bouchard, and this thing of calling him "Papa" Bouchard was an unwarrantable liberty. So he replied, freezingly:

"You are altogether mistaken. These extraordinary prints were left here by my predecessor, a scampish fellow named Marsac, a person of sporting tastes, like most of the modern young men, and they will come down to-morrow. It would seriously disturb me to have those *ballet* pictures around."

"Well, now," said de Meneval, with an unabashed front, "I think you are too hard on the poor girls. I have known a good many of them in my life—taken them to little suppers, you know—and generally they're very hard-working, decent girls.

Some of them have a husband and children to help to support. Others have dependent parents. They're unconventional—very—and like to eat and drink at somebody else's expense, but that's no great harm. Plenty of other people in much higher walks of life do the same."

"I don't care to discuss ballet girls with you, Monsieur de Meneval," remarked Monsieur Bouchard, with great dignity.

"But I want to discuss them with *you*," answered de Meneval, with what Monsieur Bouchard thought most improper levity and familiarity. "That's what I came to you this evening about. That's why I have been haunting the Rue Clarisse during the last ten days, trying to see you alone."

"Yes. I know that I have been honored with a good many cards of yours. Also of Léontine's."

"Oh, Léontine! You may be sure she does not come on the errand that brings me. While she feels the narrowness of our income as much as I do, she manages to live within her allowance, and I don't believe she owes a franc in the world. But, Papa Bouchard, to come to business—"

De Meneval paused. He had a good deal of courage, but the stony silence with which his confidences were met would have disconcerted an ogre.

"Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine," said Monsieur Bouchard, icily.

"I'm going on. You see, it is just this way—that is—" de Meneval floundered—"as I was going to say—Léontine, you know, is perfect—it really is touching to see how she bears our enforced but unnecessary poverty. I wish I could do as well."

Here de Meneval came to a dead stop, and Monsieur Bouchard, by way of encouraging him, repeated, in the same tone:

"Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine."

"But I *can't* go on with you fixing that basilisk glare on me," cried de Meneval, rising and walking about excitedly. "I believe, if you say 'Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine,' to me again, I'll do something desperate—smash

the mirror with my stick, or turn on the fire alarm. I assure you, Monsieur Bouchard, I am still a respectable member of society. I don't beat my wife or cheat at cards, and I have never committed a felony in my life."

"Glad to hear it," was Papa Bouchard's fatherly reception of this speech.

De Meneval, after walking once or twice up and down the room, succeeded in mastering his indignation, and sat quietly down in the chair he had just vacated, facing Monsieur Bouchard; then, still floundering awkwardly, he managed to say:

"I—I—am very much in want, I am, at present; in short, I am in the most unpleasant predicament." And then he mumbled, "Money."

"So I knew the moment you entered this room," was Monsieur Bouchard's rejoinder.

"There, sir," said de Meneval, recovering his spirits now that the murderer was out, "I wish you had said so in the beginning. It would have saved me a very bad quarter of an hour."

"Young man," severely replied Monsieur Bouchard, "I had not the slightest wish to save you a bad quarter of an hour."

"So it seems; but I will tell you just how it stands. You know I am stationed at Melun—"

"I have known that fact ever since I knew you."

"Very well, sir. There is a music hall at Melun—the Pigeon House—with a garden back of it, kept by one Michaux, a rascal if ever I saw one. Now, it's very dull at Melun the evenings I am on duty and can't get back to Léontine in Paris, and it's a small place, and quite naturally, when one hears the music going at the Pigeon House, and sees the lights flashing and the people eating and drinking under the trees on the terrace garden, it's quite natural, I say, to drop in there for the evening."

"Quite natural for you, sir. Go on, Monsieur le Capitaine."

De Meneval restrained his impulse

to brain Monsieur Bouchard, sitting so sternly and primly before him, and kept on:

"Then there is the garden—jolly place, with electric lights—where you can get a pretty fair meal. It is quite unique—nothing like it in Paris or anywhere else that I can think of, and I've seen a good many—" here de Meneval hastily checked himself. "It's quite the thing to give suppers to the young ladies of the ballet—and some of them are not so young, either—in the garden. The proprietor, of course, encourages it, and the girls are permitted to come out in their stage costumes to have an ice or a glass of wine. All the fellows in my regiment do it; it's considered quite the thing, and their mothers and sisters come out to the Pigeon House to see them do it. If it wasn't for the support given the place by the garrison it would have to close up, and then Melun would be duller than ever. The Pigeon House is unconventional, but perfectly respectable."

"Possibly," drily replied Monsieur Bouchard, "but not probably."

"Good heavens, sir! you are mistaken. Léontine has been teasing me for a month past to take her out there to supper some evening, and I've promised to do so this very next week. Do you think I'd take my wife to any place that wasn't respectable?"

De Meneval was getting warm over this, and Monsieur Bouchard was forced to admit that he supposed the Pigeon House *was* respectable.

"But that doesn't prevent these jolly little suppers to the young ladies of the ballet, and especially those given to them by the officers. I assure you it is mere harmless eating and drinking. The poor girls have to work hard, and when they get through of an evening I dare say very few of them have two francs to buy something to eat. So a number of us have got into the way of giving these poor souls supper after the performance. Even Major Fallière goes to these suppers, and you know his nickname in the regiment."

"No, I know of him only as a very

correct, middle-aged man. I wish you had the same sort of reputation as Major Fallière."

"Well, he is called by the juniors old P. M. P.—that is to say, the Pink of Military Propriety. And Fallière is my chum, and *he* goes to these little suppers."

De Meneval brought this out with an air of triumph, but Monsieur Bouchard remained coldly unresponsive, and then de Meneval let the cat out of the bag.

"And I say, Monsieur Bouchard, the proprietor of the Pigeon House sent me in my account the other day—nineteen hundred francs, nineteen centimes—and I haven't got the money to pay it."

De Meneval lay back and waited for the explosion. Monsieur Bouchard started from his chair, bawling:

"Nineteen hundred francs! And you no doubt expect me to pay it out of your wife's income! I wonder what Léontine would say to this!"

"That's just what I've been wondering, too," replied de Meneval, somewhat dolefully. "Léontine is the dearest girl in the world, but she is a woman, after all. I can prove to her that I have never given a franc's worth to any other woman, except something to eat and drink, but all the same I'd just as soon she would think I spent my Melun evenings sitting in my quarters, with her picture before me and reading up on ballistics, as an artillery officer should."

"And would you deliberately impose on her innocence in this respect?" asked Monsieur Bouchard, indignantly.

"My dear sir," calmly replied de Meneval, "you have never been married. If you had, you would deal more intelligently with the situation."

"I think our standard of intelligence is not the same," grimly responded Monsieur Bouchard. "But when I tell Léontine about this nineteen hundred francs due at the Pigeon House, I trust she will be able to deal with you intelligently."

"I am afraid she will," replied de Meneval, with some anxiety; "but

after it's paid I know I can persuade her that it was not the least actual harm—just a little lark in the way of killing time."

"And may I ask, since you speak so confidently of its being paid, whom do you expect to pay it?"

"You, sir, of course," replied de Meneval, taking a cigar out of Monsieur Bouchard's case.

Papa Bouchard jumped as if a hornet had stung him. "I, sir? Since you have assumed this modest expectation, perhaps you anticipate that I will pay it out of my private income?"

"Oh, no, I mean out of my wife's income," replied de Meneval, puffing away at his cigar.

"You are too modest, Monsieur le Capitaine. Now let me tell you this—you misunderstood your customer in bringing this outrageous bill to me, and it won't be paid. I have a sincere affection for Léontine, and I don't intend to let any captain of artillery in the French army, husband or no husband, make ducks and drakes of her money."

Papa Bouchard leaned back, folded his arms and looked the embodiment of statuesque determination. Captain de Meneval puffed a while longer at his cigar, and then rose. There was resolution, as if he still held a trump card to play, written on his countenance.

"Very well, Monsieur Bouchard," he said, readjusting the blossoms in his buttonhole. "I am sorry you are so unyielding. You didn't ask me if I was prepared to offer any security that the loan would be repaid. If you had I should have given you this."

De Meneval pulled from his pocket a string of diamonds, every stone glittering like a star.

"This is the diamond necklace I gave Léontine on our marriage. Of course, I could not afford it, but I was in love with her—I'm more in love with her now—and I gave her what would please her, without counting the cost."

Papa Bouchard gasped. "And Léontine—does she know of this?"

De Meneval shook his head. "You

see, when I bought this necklace for twenty thousand francs the jeweler showed me at the same time an exact copy of it in paste—seventy-five francs. He told me when he sold a necklace like this he usually sold a counterfeit. I bought the seventy-five-franc necklace, too—and I didn't mention it to Léontine. I think all the philosophers, beginning with the Egyptian school of something or other B.C., down through the Greeks and the Romans to Kant and Schopenhauer, agree that it is not philosophic for a married man to tell everything to his wife. So I never told Léontine about this imitation necklace, but kept it for an emergency, as the jeweler—a married man—advised me. To-night, when I saw I was in a tight place and had to come to you, I quietly slipped the paste necklace into the case, which we keep in our strong-box, and put the real one into my pocket. I came within an ace of being caught by Léontine, though. The dear girl entered the room a minute afterward and asked me to get out her diamond necklace—she was going to the opera with some friends of hers—and off she's gone, glittering with paste, while here is the real thing."

Papa Bouchard was staggered for a minute or two. Then he said: "So you expected me to turn amateur pawnbroker for your benefit?"

"Well," replied de Meneval, stroking his mustache, "I should not have put it in that brutally frank fashion myself, but if you don't care to act the amateur pawnbroker, I shall be obliged to take it to the professionals."

"No, no, no!" cried Papa Bouchard. He really was fond of Léontine, and didn't mean to risk her diamonds. Nevertheless, there was a stand-and-deliver air about the whole transaction which vexed him inexpressibly. He sat silent for a while and so did de Meneval.

Papa Bouchard, for all that he had been hectored by a woman all his life, was yet no fool. He saw that de Meneval had him in a trap, and rea-

sioned out the whole thing inside of two minutes.

"Now, Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, presently, "I see where we stand. I will not lend you the money out of Léontine's income—but I will lend it to you myself. I shall keep this necklace until the money is paid. Meanwhile, I shall go out to see this place—the Pigeon House—and judge for myself all these facts that you allege."

"Do!" cried the cheerful reprobate, with a grin. "Perhaps you'll like it and get into the habit of going there."

"And perhaps," replied Papa Bouchard, "I may not like it, and you may have your income reduced if you persist in going there. And then, when the whole transaction is concluded and the money repaid, I shall disclose every particular of it to Léontine."

"By all means!" De Meneval was actually laughing in Papa Bouchard's face. "I'll deny every word of it, of course, and call for proof. I'll tell Léontine you tried to persuade me to go out there with you and I refused. I'll bring twenty of the best fellows in the regiment to swear *you* gave the suppers—and you'll see who comes out ahead in *that* game."

Papa Bouchard was so horrified at the cold-blooded villainy of this that he could hardly speak for a minute. But he refused to take the threat seriously, and demanding the bill, which de Meneval promptly produced, said, stiffly:

"You will hear from me in a day or two."

"Ta, ta!" called out the graceless dog of a captain, picking up his hat. "Remember, you are on your good behavior. One single indiscretion at the Pigeon House and I'll telegraph the whole story to Mademoiselle Bouchard, and then—"

Papa Bouchard simply sat and swelled with rage at the unabashed front of this captain of artillery—but he was galvanized into motion by a light tap on the door and a musical voice calling:

"Are you in, Papa Bouchard?"

Although all the fulminations of

Monsieur Bouchard had failed to affect Captain de Meneval, the sound of that voice flurried him considerably. For it was Léontine's, and de Meneval had no particular desire for an interview with her under Papa Bouchard's basilisk eye. He turned quite pale, did this robust captain, and muttered:

"I don't want to be caught here."

Papa Bouchard smiled in a superior manner—he rather liked the notion of de Meneval being caught there—and called out to Léontine:

"Come in."

Papa Bouchard's hat, cape, greatcoat and umbrella lay on a chair where he had placed them on coming in. Without so much as saying, "By your leave," de Meneval slung the greatcoat round him, clapped Papa Bouchard's hat on his head, seized the umbrella in such a way as to hide his face, and with his own hat under his arm opened the door to the lobby and darted past Léontine, nearly knocking her down.

Léontine, wearing an evening gown, a long and beautiful white mantle, and a chiffon scarf over her head, entered, somewhat discomposed by her encounter.

"What a very rude man that was who pushed by me so suddenly!" she said, advancing. "Some of your tiresome clients, Papa Bouchard, and I order you not to have that creature here again." And she ran forward and kissed Monsieur Bouchard on his bald head.

Now it was plain that this pretty Léontine took liberties with her guardian, godfather and trustee, and also that Papa Bouchard liked these liberties. It was in vain that he tried to assume a stern air with Léontine. She pinched his ear when he scolded, drew caricatures of him when he frowned, and when at last he was forced to smile, as he always was, pushed herself on the arm of his chair and declined to be evicted. And she was so very pretty! The French have a saying that the devil himself was handsome when he was young. Léontine de Meneval had more than the mere beauty of youth, of form, of

color. She was the embodiment of graceful gaiety. She looked like one of those brilliant white butterflies whose lives are spent dancing in the sun. The great and glorious dowry of love, of youth, of beauty, of health, of happiness was hers. Her entering the room was like a breath of daffodils in Spring. She was a most beguiling creature. It was a source of wonder and congratulation to Papa Bouchard that this charming girl did not succeed in bamboozling all of her own income out of him and all of his as well.

Having kissed him, pinched his ear and otherwise agreeably maltreated her trustee, Léontine looked round the new apartment with dancing eyes.

"Well," she cried, laughing, "I see how it is. You couldn't stand the Rue Clarisse another day or hour. Did anybody ever tell you, Papa Bouchard, that you had a vein of—a vein of—what shall I call it?—a taste for the wine of life in you?"

"Nobody ever did," replied Papa Bouchard, trying to be stern.

"Then I tell you so. And look at these pictures—oh, oh!"

Léontine covered her face with her chiffon scarf, to avoid the sight of the young ladies pointing skyward with their toes.

"And I wonder what Aunt Céleste will say when she sees them," continued this impish Léontine.

"She won't see them. They will be removed to-morrow," hastily put in Papa Bouchard.

"You'd better, you dear old thing, if you value your life. I shall have to tell Victor about this. How he will laugh! I do all I can to make him laugh and to amuse him when he is with me, for it is *so* dull for him when he is obliged to stay at Melun. When his regimental duties are over he has nothing to do in the evening but to sit in his quarters and study up ballistics, as he calls it, and look at my picture by way of refreshment."

Papa Bouchard sniffed. He commonly sniffed at the mention of Captain de Meneval's name.

"But," continued Léontine, trying

to curl Papa Bouchard's scanty hair, using her pretty fingers for curling tongs, "he won't be so lonely now at Melun, for his old chum, Major Fallière, is stationed there, too, and he and Victor are like brothers. You know, dear Papa Bouchard, that you yourself admitted Major Fallière's friendship to be a letter of recommendation to any man. He is called the Pink of Military Propriety, and if Victor led the larky life you so unjustly suspect him of, he couldn't be friends with Major Fallière, who is positively straitlaced."

"I can't say I ever saw a really straitlaced major," replied Papa Bouchard.

"And I have not yet seen this dear old P. M. P. He was in Algiers when Victor and I were married, and he has been so little in Paris since his return that he has not yet had a chance to call. But he has sent me word by Victor that he already loves me, and I hope to see him in a few days, for Victor has promised to let me come out to Melun and dine at the Pigeon House."

"The Pigeon House!"

"Yes. Why not? You'll be going there yourself, I dare say, now that you have eloped from Aunt Céleste. Oh, you'll be a desperate character in time, I have no doubt. I see it in your eye. Victor and I, though, shall keep watch on you, if you go too far and too fast!"

This was a nice way for a ward to talk to her trustee—and such a trustee as Monsieur Bouchard! Therefore Papa Bouchard called up his most resolute air of disapproval, and said:

"I am afraid the Pigeon House is hardly a proper place for you to go to, Léontine."

"If I thought that I should have been out there long ago," responded this sprightly imp. "But, unluckily, it's perfectly proper."

"I wish," replied Papa Bouchard, "you could get one single serious idea into that head of yours."

"I have a great many serious ideas," said Léontine, suddenly as-

suming an unwonted air of gravity, and leaving her perch on the arm of Papa Bouchard's chair for a seat directly facing him. "What would you say if I told you that I am taking a deep and real interest in practical sociological questions, such as giving employment to the deserving workers?"

"I should say you were at last reaching the development I have always wished for you. But I hope you are confining your experiments to giving work only. The mere giving of money tends to pauperize. The giving of work is the intelligent mode of benefiting a man or a woman."

"That's it precisely," cried Léontine, instantly losing her air of gravity, and jumping up to kiss the bald spot on the top of Papa Bouchard's head. Then she resumed her chair and her serious manner simultaneously. "That's what I knew you'd say, dear Papa Bouchard. I had your approval in mind all the time. It came about in this way," continued Léontine, solemnly. "There is a very worthy man—a Pole, Putzki by name—who is one of the best tailors in Paris. I became very much interested in this man; likewise in his jackets, coats and riding habits. I have been to his shop several times and talked with him. The man is an exile from his native country. How sad that is! And he cannot go back. He is very deserving and has a family to support. He doesn't ask for charity, but I gave him—"

"All the money you had," hastily and angrily interjected Papa Bouchard.

"Not at all," replied Léontine, with dignity. "I had learned better than that. I have not given him a franc. But I ordered, out of pure charity and good will to a fellow creature, five walking gowns, three jackets, two long coats, a yachting costume and a couple of riding habits."

Papa Bouchard's mouth opened wide, but no sound came forth. Léontine, taking advantage of his amazed silence, kept on, rapidly:

"Then there is another deserving

case—Louise, a milliner and modiste. She has a husband who squanders her money on his pleasures. If Victor did that I think it would kill me. Like Putzki, she does not ask money, but work. Out of sympathy for her I have had her make me four ball gowns, nine visiting and house costumes, some little *négligées* and things and about eighteen hats. And here are the bills."

With this Léontine drew out two huge bills and thrust them into Papa Bouchard's scowling face. Not only was he annoyed with Léontine for her extravagance, but he was conscious that she had fooled him. He sat perfectly still and silent, glaring into Léontine's serious, pretty countenance—not so serious, though, but that Papa Bouchard saw the shadow of a smile on her rose-lipped mouth.

"And you expect to pay those bills out of your allowance, I presume?" said Papa Bouchard, sarcastically, after a moment.

"You flatter me," replied Léontine. "I always knew I was a good financier, but to expect me to pay such bills as these out of my meagre allowance is to credit me with the financial genius of a Rothschild."

"Then they will go unpaid!" cried Papa Bouchard, determinedly. This assault on him, following hard on Captain de Meneval's, was rather more than he could stand. Léontine did not know it, but the defeat Papa Bouchard had just suffered at the hands of that good-looking scapegrace, her husband, had hardened his heart against her and her milliner's and tailor's bills. However, she was not easily frightened. She only tapped her little foot, smiled loftily and said:

"But they *must* be paid!"

Papa Bouchard, who had no more voice than a crow, began to hum a tune and to turn over the leaves of a scientific journal that lay on the table before him. A pause followed. Then Léontine said again, very softly and very determinedly:

"And they *will* be paid."

"How, may I ask?" inquired Papa Bouchard, whirling round on her.

Léontine, throwing aside her chiffon scarf, which she had held round her bare, white neck, showed a string of diamonds, as she thought them to be—paste, Papa Bouchard knew them to be—and said:

"My wedding gift from Victor. They are worth twenty thousand francs. I can easily raise ten thousand on them."

Papa Bouchard lay back in his chair, absolutely stunned. So, both of them were for turning the necklace into cash! And what scandal would be precipitated if Léontine carried out her intention! The necklace would be discovered to be paste, and Léontine would naturally be deeply incensed against her husband; Papa Bouchard was that already, but he really loved his little Léontine, and the thought of trouble between her and her husband disturbed him.

"Does Captain de Meneval know of these bills?" he asked, significantly.

Léontine hung her head. "No," she faltered, "and that is the part that distresses me. Victor has been so *very* prudent—has no bills, poor fellow—he has no amusements away from me—and I—I have been so selfish—" Léontine's eyes were bright with tears.

"Don't make yourself unhappy about Victor being too prudent. He need never give you any anxiety on that point," was Papa Bouchard's unfeeling reply.

There was a moment's silence. Papa Bouchard, who had a shrewd head for business, was rapidly cogitating the best thing to do under the circumstances. Léontine, who had no head for business at all, was wondering how she could keep Victor from noticing the absence of the necklace. She had just concluded to fall into a state of great weakness and prostration, thus preventing her from going into society, when she received something like a galvanic shock, for there, before her eyes, Papa Bouchard was holding up the exact counterpart of her necklace. The two masses of jewels made a blaze of light.

"Where did you get it?" she gasped,

pointing to the glittering thing in Papa Bouchard's hand.

Now Papa Bouchard was a clever man, as men are clever, but he was not so clever as a woman. A brilliant scheme had flashed into his mind—he would produce the real necklace, tell Léontine it was paste, and so make sure that she would not take it to the pawnbroker, and he could manage both de Meneval and Léontine equally well with the paste necklace. He did not much fancy having the responsibility of so many diamonds as the real one contained. But he had not foreseen this direct and embarrassing question of Léontine's. He looked blank for a moment or two, and then, having no better answer ready, replied:

"I wish you wouldn't ask such questions, Léontine. Of course I came by it honestly."

"Of course—of course," cried Léontine, jumping up. "Does Aunt Céleste know of this?"

"N—n—no," faltered Papa Bouchard. This was another facer for him.

Léontine had not the slightest doubt that Papa Bouchard could give a perfectly rational and correct account of how he came by the necklace—it was probably the property of some client—but seeing a fine chance to hold Papa Bouchard up to obloquy and to lecture him, she promptly determined to give him the benefit of her pretended suspicions. She therefore rose with great dignity, gathered her drapery about her, and looking significantly at Papa Bouchard, said:

"You will pardon me for saying that this has a most singular appearance, and I shall lose no time in informing Aunt Céleste."

Papa Bouchard turned pale. Was ever such a diabolical trap laid for an innocent man? He was not at all sure, if he gave the true account of how he came by the stones, that Captain de Meneval would not carry out his threat and deny the whole business. The fellow had actually laughed while he was making the threat, and seemed to regard it as an

excellent joke to impair the peace and honor of a respectable elderly gentleman. Papa Bouchard got up, sat down again, and groaned.

"Léontine," he said, to that professedly indignant young woman, "you don't understand."

"No, I *don't* understand," replied Léontine, with unkind emphasis.

"It was this way—I was out at St. Germain the other day—" Papa Bouchard was floundering hopelessly, but a bright thought struck him—"the day of the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians. Very interesting time we had—several specimens of the paleozoic age were found—"

"And this match to my necklace was among them? Fie, Papa Bouchard!"

"Not at all. Will you let me speak? I say I was out at St. Germain for the meeting of the Society of French Antiquarians. The curator of the museum is a great friend of mine—he has an old mother—finest old lady you ever saw—eighty years old, bedridden and stone blind, but as young as a daisy, full of life and talk—it's a treat to see her. My friend wanted a birthday present for her, and I had seen this necklace in a shop window in the Avenue de l'Opéra—and I proposed to—to—to—" Papa Bouchard faltered.

"For an old lady, eighty years old and bedridden? Oh, Papa Bouchard, try again!"

"Léontine," said Papa Bouchard, sternly, "I don't like these flippant interruptions. I did not say—I never meant to say that I proposed to buy a diamond necklace for an old lady, bedridden and eighty years of age. It happened there were spectacles of all kinds made and kept at the same shop—and I went and got a pair of Scotch pebble glasses, at fifty francs—"

"But you said she was stone blind!"

"What if I did? I didn't say I got the glasses for her. But as I see you won't let me tell you the story of the necklace, I shall simply keep it to myself. As a matter of fact, they are not diamonds; they are paste."

Léontine, taking the real stones in her hand, examined them carefully. Then, laying them against the necklace round her neck, remarked: "I see they are. Paste, pure and simple."

Papa Bouchard could hardly suppress a smile at this, but he did.

"Very well. They are paste, and they cost seventy-five francs. Now, I will make you a proposition. I propose that I shall look into these bills and see what arrangement can be made with Putzki and Louise, and reach some basis of settlement whereby I may be able, by making a series of small payments out of your income, to get rid of them. Meanwhile, I am afraid to trust you with your own necklace—you will always be trying to raise money on it. So I shall hand you over this paste one, which no one but a jeweler can tell from the real one. You will give me the real one—and I will hold it until your bills are paid. Then I will return it to you. I suppose you don't wish your husband to know of this, and I will agree to keep it from him as long as you keep out of debt. But if you ever transgress in this way again I shall tell him the whole story."

Léontine listened to this with the utmost gravity, and then replied: "You are a very clever man, Papa Bouchard, but you will find your little Léontine a very clever woman—too clever to put her head into the noose you have so kindly held open for her. I sha'n't dream of giving up my necklace for anything less than a cheque out of my own money for the payment in full of these bills. I should be willing to take the paste necklace temporarily until the bills are paid. After you have returned it to me I sha'n't be in the least afraid of your telling Victor, for if you do I shall tell Aunt Céleste all your tales about the bedridden old lady and the trip to St. Germain and the widow—"

"What widow?" asked Papa Bouchard, forgetful for a moment of the lady he had met in the railway carriage two days in succession.

"The prim little widow you went to Verneuil with. My maid happened

to be on the same train and saw you helping her out, and heard you say to her you were going to St. Germain to-day—and by the way, I happen to know you *did* go to St. Germain to-day."

What a story was this to hatch about the most correct old gentleman in Paris! Papa Bouchard simply glared at Léontine, but that merry young woman was smiling and dimpling, as if debts and duns and trips to Verneuil and diamond necklaces were quite the ordinary ingredients of life. The hen that hatched a cockatrice was no more puzzled and dismayed than was Papa Bouchard at the vagaries of his ward.

"Well," cried he, after a pause, determined to put a bold front on the matter, "what if I did find a lady in the same railway carriage with me, going to Verneuil? I hadn't hired the whole train, or even a whole carriage. And what if she was a widow, and good-looking! And suppose to-day, in the pursuit of science, I go to St. Germain, and quite by accident I find the same lady in the compartment with me? What does that mean except a series of accidents?"

"Yes, a series of accidents," replied Léontine, with an arch glance. The minx seemed to have no more conscience about teasing poor Papa Bouchard than had her rattlebrain of a husband. "It is remarkable that accidents like these always happen in cycles. I should be willing to wager that a third accident is now brewing, and you will see that prim little widow again before the week is out. I shouldn't be surprised if this change of quarters had something to do with it!"

"Léontine!" said Papa Bouchard, indignantly, but that heedless young person only laughed and said:

"I'll tell Victor that. How the dear boy will laugh! The fact is, I don't know whether I can let Victor associate with you or not—you might lead him off into your own primrose path of dalliance with widows!"

Was ever anything so exasperating! Papa Bouchard ground his teeth

—he had a great mind to throw over the whole business of Léontine's money and her affairs, only he knew it would please her too well. His grim meditations were interrupted by Léontine tapping him on the shoulder and saying, "Now, will you hand me over the cheque for the whole amount of those bills—six thousand francs—or must I take this—" touching the paste necklace round her throat—"to the pawn-broker?"

"You certainly can't expect me to give you a cheque until I have looked into these swindling bills."

"That's true. However, your promise will be enough. I will make this compromise with you: I'll take the paste—" taking up the real necklace as it lay sparkling on the table—"and you may take the stones. When the bills are paid you won't be afraid then to trust me with my own necklace—"

"Yes, I shall," replied Papa Bouchard. "But at all events, I reserve the right to tell your husband if I choose to. I am not intimidated by your threat to tell my sister some cock-and-bull story about *me*."

Léontine reflected a moment, her pretty head on her hand.

"Do you know, dear Papa Bouchard," she said, after a while, "that you and I are engaged in what the Americans call a game of *bluff*?"

"Don't know anything about the Americans. Don't know what *bluff* is."

"Oh, yes, you do—you know the thing, although you may not recognize the name. But you are a good soul, Papa Bouchard, and Victor and I *do* bother you a good deal; but only help me out this once—with Putzki and Louise—and don't tell Victor, and I'll not tell Aunt Céleste, and everything will come perfectly right."

As Léontine spoke she unclasped her necklace, kissed it, and with a gesture of scorn put on the real necklace, saying to herself: "I never thought I should come to this."

And then came a loud rat-tat at the door, and in walked Captain de Me-

neval again. He carried Monsieur Bouchard's impedimenta, with which he had so unceremoniously made off. Both he and Léontine looked thoroughly disconcerted at meeting each other. De Meneval thought she had gone away. Léontine blushed guiltily, and had barely enough presence of mind to cover up the necklace lying on the table with Papa Bouchard's scientific journal.

"Ah, good-evening, Papa Bouchard!" cried this arch-hypocrite of an artillery captain, as if he had not seen Monsieur Bouchard half an hour before. "I came to return your umbrella and coat. Thanks very much for lending them to me in an emergency. Why, little girl, I thought you were on your way to the opera?"

"I am just going," answered Léontine, moving toward the door.

"One moment!" cried Papa Bouchard, waving his arm authoritatively. These two scapegraces had used him for their own purposes that night, had made game of him and had threatened to discover a mare's nest to Mademoiselle Bouchard. Now, however, he would take his revenge. "Wait," he said to Léontine, who returned reluctantly to her former place.

Monsieur Bouchard, assuming the attitude and tone with which he might have addressed a couple of criminals in the pursuit of his professional duties, then continued:

"This is a very auspicious opportunity for me to speak to you both, in each other's presence, with a view to your mutual reform. Observe the word; I use it advisedly." He paused. Léontine trembled with apprehension, while de Meneval surreptitiously mopped his brow. "You have both of you been very extravagant—wasteful, I may say. Nothing that I have yet said has availed to stop the outgo of money far beyond your reasonable wants—so I think. Now, I have come to the conclusion that in order for you to economize you must give up your apartment. You must leave Paris."

Leave Paris!

De Meneval was not so stunned but that he could get up rather a ghastly laugh.

"Leave Paris! Ha, ha! That's little enough to me, Papa Bouchard—Léontine and ballistics are all I want to make me happy anywhere—but Léontine, oh, I know she won't go!"

"Won't she, eh? Not to an inexpensive little cottage outside of Paris—within striking distance of Melun, so you may go back and forth—a *very* inexpensive cottage!"

"Well, if that's your game," cried de Meneval, savagely, "there are plenty of cottages to be had at Melun. Our veterinarian has just given up his cottage—three rooms and a dog kennel. That's cheap enough. Shall I take it to-morrow for Captain and Madame de Meneval?"

"You are trifling, Monsieur le Capitaine," coolly answered Papa Bouchard. "You understand perfectly well what I mean."

"But, Papa Bouchard," put in Léontine, faintly, "while I don't object to the cottage, it would be cruel to Victor to force him away from Paris. It is so dull, anyway, at Melun. The only recreation he has is when he comes to Paris. Poor, poor Victor!"

Léontine was almost weeping—de Meneval was swearing between his teeth. Papa Bouchard was waving his arm about, serene in the consciousness of power.

"I do not say you are to leave Paris to-night, or even to-morrow; perhaps a week—possibly a month—may be given you. But you are both too fond of gaieties, of clothes, of suppers and other dissipated things, and there are too many jewelers' shops in Paris." This thrust caused both of the culprits to quake. "So you must go to some retired place and economize."

"I see," replied de Meneval, who was thoroughly exasperated. "Having yourself practically run away from a quiet and respectable locality to these gay quarters, with young ladies of the ballet on every hand—" de Meneval

pointed angrily to the red-and-gold young ladies on the walls—"now you wish to send my poor little wife off to some hole of a village, where one may exist but not live. I don't speak of myself—I don't care. It's for her."

"Very well," answered Papa Bouchard, maliciously. "You may make that hole of a village a paradise steeped in dreamlike splendor to Léontine by your devoted and lover-like attentions to her. You can live over your honeymoon. Won't you like that, Léontine?"

"Y—yes," replied Léontine, dolefully.

"Some pretty rural place—all birds and flowers, eh? And a little dog. Doesn't the prospect charm you?"

"Yes—only—for Victor—"

"Haven't you just heard Victor say that all he needs to be perfectly happy are you and ballistics? So I suppose, Monsieur de Meneval, you will be reveling in rapture."

"I suppose so," replied de Meneval, gloomily. "Come, Léontine, shall I put you in the carriage? You won't have many chances of going to the opera, poor child, after this."

Léontine rose and said, coldly, "Good-night, Papa Bouchard." There was no tweaking of his ear, no patting of his bald head this time. They went out like two sulky and disappointed children.

Papa Bouchard remained chuckling to himself. He had those two naughty young creatures in the hollow of his hand—it would be a good while before they would dare to be saucy to him—and that little cottage in the suburbs was a fine idea. Strange it had not occurred to him before.

He seated himself in his easy-chair and began to review the events of his first day of liberty. His mind went back to the point where he had been interrupted by de Meneval's entrance—the point where the dear little bashful widow had appeared in his mind's eye. If he had been in the Rue Clarisse he would never even have dared to think of Madame Vernet, for his sister could actually read his thoughts. But here, in this jolly bachelor place,

he could think about widows all he liked. And shutting his eyes the better to recall that slim, shrinking, gray-gowned figure, he opened them to see Madame Vernet quietly walking into the room, without knocking and quite as if she belonged there. She advanced to the table on one side of the room, laid her lace parasol on it and proceeded to remove her long gloves, but stopped in the midst of the process to rearrange a chair and to set straight a picture—one of Monsieur Bouchard's.

"This is very comfortable," she said, musingly, "but I can improve it —when I am settled here."

Papa Bouchard listened as if in a dream. He had not progressed so far as that. And then Madame Vernet, turning and seeing him, uttered a faint shriek, as if she had seen a snake instead of a human being, and ran—but not toward the door.

"My dear Madame Vernet, pray do not be alarmed. It is only I—Monsieur Bouchard," cried Papa Bouchard, advancing to reassure her.

"Oh! is it you? Forgive me for being so agitated, but I am *so* easily frightened!" panted Madame Vernet. "Men always frighten me—I am the most timid woman in the world!"

"So I see," tenderly replied Papa Bouchard. He was standing quite close to Madame Vernet now, and she had clasped his arm, looking nervously about her as if she expected another man to spring out of the fireplace or down from the ceiling.

"But when I saw it was only you, all my fears vanished," she continued. "And will you tell me to what I am indebted for the honor and pleasure of this visit?"

"A question I was just asking myself. This is my new apartment."

"I beg pardon," replied Madame Vernet, "but it is *my* new apartment. I moved into it only to-day."

"And, Madame, I moved into it only to-day."

"It is number nine, fourth floor."

"No, Madame, it is number five, third floor."

"Ah," cried Madame Vernet. "I

see. My apartment is directly over this, and corresponds with it exactly. I did not go up high enough, and I am not quite familiar with the surroundings. How absurd!" and she laughed, showing the prettiest teeth imaginable.

"How delightful!" replied Monsieur Bouchard, gallantly.

"And how singular! This is the third time in three days we have met by accident."

An uncomfortable recollection of Léontine's speech about accidents of this sort occurring in cycles flashed through Monsieur Bouchard's brain, but he dismissed the thought with energy. He rather relished accidents that brought about meetings with a woman as winning, as charming, as elegant as Madame Vernet; and then there was that deliciously intoxicating feeling of independence—no need to cut the interview short, no labored explanation to give Mademoiselle Céleste. Monsieur Bouchard was his own man now—for the first time, at fifty-four years of age. So he smiled benevolently, and said:

"I wish I might ask you to sit down, but at least you will grant me permission to call on you."

"With pleasure," replied Madame Vernet. "And since you won't let me sit down—which, of course, wouldn't be proper, and I wouldn't commit the smallest impropriety for a million francs—at least let me walk about and look at your charming furnishings."

Papa Bouchard made a heartfelt apology for the red-and-gold young ladies on the walls, who evidently shocked Madame Vernet extremely. He said he meant to take them down the next day. Madame Vernet replied with gentle severity that he ought to take them down that night. However, she went into raptures over "Kittens at Play" and "Socrates and His Pupils," which gave Papa Bouchard a high idea of her intellectuality.

But in the midst of a learned dissertation on "The Coliseum by Moonlight" Madame Vernet's eyes fell on the glittering paste necklace, which Monsieur Bouchard had left lying on

the table. She picked it up gently—she did everything gently—and playfully clasping it round her neck, cried:

"How charming! I won't ask you for whom this is intended; for a sister—a niece, perhaps. Lucky girl!"

"Indeed, it is not intended for anyone," replied Monsieur Bouchard. "It is of trifling value—paste, at seventy-five francs to buy, and would sell for nothing."

"Nevertheless, it is very pretty," said Madame Vernet, looking at herself coquettishly in the mirror. And then, apparently forgetting all about the necklace, she confided to Monsieur Bouchard that she was so nervous at living alone—the only thing that reconciled her was that she had an uncle and an aunt living in the neighborhood who would watch over her. Monsieur Bouchard tried to reassure her, but Madame Vernet declined to be reassured. Her timidity was constitutional—she should never be courageous as other women, and so protesting, she gathered up her parasol and gloves, and with blushing apologies for her intrusion and a bashful invitation to Monsieur Bouchard to return her unique visit, made for the door.

Monsieur Bouchard was charmed, flattered, tickled and flustered beyond expression, but he was likewise terrified at the thought that Madame Vernet had evidently forgotten that she had the necklace clasped round her throat and was going off with it. Paste though it was, Monsieur Bouchard had no mind to let it go out of his own hands. He followed her to the door, saying, "Madame, you have probably forgotten—"

"Oh, no, I haven't," smilingly replied Madame Vernet; "I know my own apartment now—it is number nine."

"But—but—you have inadvertently—er—a—" Poor Monsieur Bouchard mopped his forehead in his agony.

"Yes, quite inadvertently entered your apartment. Oh, how alarmed I was when I first saw you! But you were so kind. Forgive me, and don't

forget your promise to call. Good-bye."

And just as Monsieur Bouchard had made up his mind to ask for the necklace she flitted out of the door.

Monsieur Bouchard sank, or rather fell, into a chair. His head was in a whirl. He felt as if the events of that day were beginning to be a little too much for him. Just at that moment Pierre appeared from no one could exactly say where.

"Come, now," said that functionary, in a tone of what Monsieur Bouchard would have thought brazen familiarity the day before, "I know all about it, I saw the whole transaction; remember, Monsieur, we are pals now. She can't get money on it any more than Madame de Meneval can, and she'll be sure to turn up again. Oh, you'll come out all right, Monsieur. Cheer up. We'll live a merry life, and after all, it is something to be away from that dreary old hole in the Rue Clarisse. I feel like doing this." And Pierre, the staid, sober and decorous valet of thirty years' service, cut the pigeon wing, twirled round on one leg, with the other stuck stiffly out like a ballet dancer's, and kissing his hand in the direction of Madame Vernet's apartment, cried, "Oh, we're a gay pair of boys! We mean to see life! And no peaching on each other!" And with ineffable impudence, he winked at Monsieur Bouchard.

II

MONSIEUR BOUCHARD waked next morning with a delicious sense of youth and irresponsibility. There was no one to demand an account of him for anything. As for Pierre, Monsieur Bouchard determined to treat his vagaries in a jocular manner—it was simply the honest fellow's way of showing joy at his emancipation. And when Pierre appeared, to shave his master, both of them wore a cheerful air. It was their 14th of July.

Pierre, at the same time he brought the hot water, brought Monsieur Bou-

chard's letters. What a comfort to read them without having to give an explanation of every one to Mademoiselle Céleste! Monsieur Bouchard actually enjoyed receiving his tailor's bill for the half-year under these circumstances. As for Pierre, he went about whistling jovially, and Monsieur Bouchard had not the heart or the inclination to stop him. The only fly in Monsieur Bouchard's ointment was the unpleasant reflection that Madame Vernet still had the paste necklace, but he felt sure that she had discovered her inadvertence of the night before, and would return the thing during the day.

"I suppose," said Pierre, who seemed to have quite taken the direction of Monsieur Bouchard's affairs, "that Monsieur will be looking after the bills of Captain and Madame de Meneval to-day."

"I certainly shall," replied Monsieur Bouchard.

"And, Monsieur, you will find it necessary to go out to the Pigeon House at Melun to settle up Monsieur le Capitaine's account without Madame finding it out?"

"I suppose so," answered Monsieur Bouchard. "It is a nuisance; I never was at Melun in my life."

"But that's no reason why Monsieur never should go to Melun; and I've been told that the Pigeon House is a very gay place, with excellent wine. Suppose Monsieur makes an evening of it out there?"

"Pierre," said Monsieur Bouchard, wheeling round on him, "are you trying to get me into all sorts of indiscretions in order to report me to the Rue Clarisse?"

"Lord, no, sir!" replied Pierre, with much readiness. "I am going to the Moulin Rouge myself to-night, and I'm sure if my wife knew it she would take not only my hair, but my scalp with it, off my head. The Moulin Rouge is a harmless enough place, but that's what's been the matter with our bringing up, Monsieur—we weren't allowed to go to harmless places even. For my part, I mean to have my fling, even if my wife does

find it out, and disciplines me. But there's no reason for either one of us being found out if we'll only agree to stand by each other."

This was very satisfactory; in fact, everything seemed to be coming Monsieur Bouchard's way, except—the paste necklace. The thought of that, like the ghost at *Lady Macbeth's* tea party, would not down. Monsieur Bouchard waited and lingered and dallied over his breakfast, and yet no parcel came from Madame Vernet. He did not care to remain at home all day waiting for it; no doubt it would come. It occurred to him that the best plan was to take Pierre completely into his confidence. It was true the rascal knew something of what had happened the night before, but Monsieur Bouchard felt it necessary, in Pierre's new rôle of trusty henchman and prime minister, to confide all the particulars to him. However, this must be done in a manner consistent with the relations of master and man. So, when Pierre was handing him his coat, hat and gloves, preparatory to going out, Monsieur Bouchard remarked, quite casually, as if Pierre knew nothing of the happenings of the night before:

"By the way, I am expecting a little parcel to be sent me by Madame Vernet, the lady on the next floor, a very pretty little woman—a widow—"

"Trust Monsieur for finding out all the pretty little widows between here and the Rue Clarisse," replied Pierre, with the impudent grin that had scarce left his face since he established himself in the Rue Bassano.

Now, this remark was not only grossly familiar but grotesquely untrue, so Monsieur Bouchard frowned and said, sternly:

"You forget yourself."

"And all the pretty little widows will have an eye on Monsieur," replied this unabashed reprobate of a Pierre.

At this Monsieur Bouchard wished to frown, but could not. Instead, his mouth came open in a pleased smile.

"Well, well, that may or may not be true. At all events, last night Madame Vernet, by the merest accident, came into this apartment, mistaking it for her own." Monsieur Bouchard paused. It was rather a difficult story to tell.

"By accident, did you say, Monsieur?"

"Altogether by accident. A paste necklace belonging to Madame de Meneval was lying on my table, and Madame Vernet inadvertently carried it off. She will no doubt return it this morning. Take care of it when it comes."

"I will, sir, if it comes. But Monsieur will pardon me if I say I don't expect it to come—that is, if I know anything about women."

"But you *don't* know anything about women," curtly replied Monsieur Bouchard. Pierre was getting quite beside himself.

"True, Monsieur, I have been married thirty years. That is enough to convince the toughest skeptic who ever lived that he doesn't know anything about women. But, all the same, Madame Vernet isn't going to send that necklace back."

Monsieur Bouchard turned pale and took an agitated turn about the room.

"Did Monsieur buy the paste necklace for — for — Mademoiselle Bouchard?" asked Pierre.

"No, you idiot! Didn't I tell you it belongs to Madame de Meneval—no—to Captain de Meneval—oh, the devil!"

Such expletives as this had been strictly forbidden in the Rue Clarisse, and in spite of his annoyance Monsieur Bouchard felt a sense of pleasure in being able to call on the devil in a casual and informal manner.

"I understand, Monsieur," replied Pierre, with the wink that, like the grin, appeared to have become constitutional with him since his advent in the Rue Bassano. "The accidental Madame Vernet appears to have become accidentally possessed of a paste necklace that is not hers. Accidents will happen; but one acci-

dent that I am sure will not occur is the return of the necklace."

"Damnation!" roared Monsieur Bouchard. He felt a delicious relish in saying this profane word. It was the first time in his life he had ever used it.

"Very well, Monsieur. Damnation or no damnation, I will keep the necklace for you—if I get it."

Monsieur Bouchard dashed down the stairs faster than he had ever done in his life before. But on reaching the street and adopting a decorous pace, he thought, "Of course it's nonsense to suppose that she won't return it. The fact is, I have got to discipline that Pierre. He has altogether forgotten himself, and I shall have to teach him a few lessons."

Meanwhile, in the gay little apartment in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, where the de Meneval entourage was situated, the necklace had become a haunting ghost as well as in the Rue Bassano.

As Léontine and her husband sat opposite each other at breakfast in the pretty little *salle à manger*, each felt like a criminal. It was a very pretty little *salle à manger*—just the sort of room for a young couple with a modest income, yet sufficient to live on. But there is not a young couple in existence who, knowing that their income is cut exactly in half while the other half is saved up for them, would be satisfied with their moiety. This, however, was bliss compared to the prospect of that dreary little cottage in the country to which Papa Bouchard had condemned them—or rather, to which they had condemned each other—for each thought secretly that but for those unlucky debts and the diamond necklace, Papa Bouchard would never have been so hard on them. The most painful part of it was, however, the necessity of concealment each felt toward the other. They had, up to this time, lived their married life with the perfect frankness of two devoted young persons who love and confide in each other, and this was what it had come

to—bitterly thought de Meneval, who truly loved his pretty little wife—her diamonds practically put in pawn by him with that old curmudgeon, who had got thereby just the opportunity he wanted to exile them from Paris. All these thoughts chased through his mind as he looked at Léontine with a new and unpleasant conviction that he was a villain.

Léontine, for her part, felt a horrid heart-sickness when she remembered the paste necklace quietly reposing in the strong-box in her dressing-room, while Victor's wedding gift was in Papa Bouchard's strong-box in the Rue Bassano. And that dull little house in the country! It was she who had brought all this on Victor, and the thought filled her heart with remorseful tenderness toward her husband. She addressed him by the fondest names as she poured his coffee for him.

"And you have to go to that tiresome Melun to-day, to be away from me two whole days?"

"Yes," replied de Meneval. "How I wish you could go with me! I have often been sorry I gave up my quarters to accommodate Lefebvre, with his wife and four children to support on her *dot* and his captain's pay. I didn't mind living *en garçon* until I had a wife of my own."

It was quite true that de Meneval, out of generosity, had given up the best part of his quarters to his brother officer, and had not the heart to ask for them again, especially as he was generally supposed to be in the enjoyment of a large income.

"Don't say you are sorry, Victor. For my part, charming as it would be to stay at Melun with you, I am glad you can help the poor Lefebvres. *We* know what it is to want money, don't we?"

"Indeed we do."

"And our case is the harder that no one will believe we haven't the use of our money."

Léontine, who was delicate-minded, always called her money "our money," and de Meneval deeply and affectionately appreciated this.

"And it will be duller than ever at that odious little cottage in the suburbs of Melun."

"Oh, yes. Léontine, I am afraid it is I who have brought this on you."

"No, no, no—it is I, or rather Papa Bouchard's old-fashioned, stingy ideas. He has no notion of what a modern way of living costs."

"But he will find out in the Rue Bassano, if I'm not mistaken," said de Meneval, laughing suddenly.

Then there was a long pause, broken by Léontine's throwing down her napkin and crying out:

"I have an inspiration! We are so dull and disheartened to-day that nothing but a supper at the Pigeon House will cheer us up. You will take me there to-night. Remember, you promised me."

"Did I?" asked poor de Meneval. He was, in truth, afraid to show his face at the Pigeon House lest the head waiter should quietly tap him on the shoulder and ask him to step up to the bureau and pay nineteen hundred francs.

"And I must and will go this very evening!" cried Léontine, jumping up and running around to her husband's chair, where she proceeded to perch herself on the arm. "I know exactly how it can be done. I will take the eight o'clock train. You will meet me at the station. We will go to the Pigeon House, where you will secure a table in that charming terrace garden you have told me so much about. We will have a jolly little supper—and I'll pay for the champagne. No—no!" putting her hands over de Meneval's mouth. "And it will be such fun to watch the queer people passing in and out of the music hall!"

"Some of them," said de Meneval, with the hope of frightening Léontine, "are very queer indeed."

"Yes, yes, I know. You have often told me about the singers and dancers coming out there in their theatre clothes, and that's just what I want to see. And as for any impropriety—haven't I often heard you say that every one of those hard-working ballet

girls is supporting her bedridden parents, or crippled husband, or something of the sort?"

"I did say that many of them are honest and hard-working."

"I am sure of it! The mere fact that they work is enough. You know I have been studying sociology of late, and I know something about the working people." Léontine, as she said this, had an uncomfortable twinge when she remembered Putzki and Louise.

Now if anything in the world was calculated to make the bright June morning blacker than it was already to de Meneval, it was this sudden freak of Léontine's to go out to the Pigeon House to supper. He fidgeted in his chair, and hummed and ha'd, but Léontine prattled on, talking about the amusement she should have.

"And I shall at last meet Major Fallière! I am so anxious to know him, the dear old thing!"

"Fallière won't be at Melun to-night. He goes to Châlons on special duty to-day," cried de Meneval, seeing a gleam of hope. "Why not wait until he comes back—some time next week?"

"Oh, it is quite useless waiting for an officer. He may be snatched up at any time and packed off to the ends of the earth. And go to the Pigeon House to-night I shall, I will, I must—" she punctuated this sentence by giving de Meneval three charming kisses—"and if it's very improper, so much the better! I shall go to the Rue Clarisse and tell Aunt Céleste you forced me to go against my will, and so escape a scolding."

"That's all very well," replied poor de Meneval, "but how will you get back to-night? I can't leave—and I don't know of anyone returning to Paris."

"Don't bother your head about that. You will put me on the train at Melun—my maid will meet me at the St. Lazare station. What could be simpler? No, no, no! I shall sup with you to-night at the Pigeon House, so be sure and meet me at the station at

half-past eight o'clock—you have just time to make your train." And she flew into his room, brought out his helmet and sword—for he was in uniform, being ready to report for duty—and kissing him affectionately, pushed him out of the door. De Meneval ran down the stairs and, jumping into a cab, drove rapidly off. He waved his hand to Léontine, watching him from the balcony.

Deceits and concealments were a new burden for Léontine to carry, and she spent a wretched day. It was not improved by the behavior of Putzki or Louise when she went to see them, for both of them were dissatisfied with the small payment she could make, and did not relish the idea of Monsieur Bouchard, who was a terror to swindlers, going over their bills.

After these two unpleasant interviews Léontine drove to the Rue Clarisse. What a dismal old street it was, anyhow! Dark and dull and utterly without life—no wonder Papa Bouchard had tired of it and had levanted into a gayer precinct. When she was ushered into Mademoiselle Bouchard's dingy little drawing-room she found that good woman, Aunt Céleste, seated with one eye on her embroidery and the other on Élise, who was polishing up the already shining furniture. Aunt Céleste's usually placid face was troubled, but it lighted up when she saw the smiling Léontine running in. Aunt Céleste was really fond of the girl, albeit she was in chronic spasms over Léontine's modern, and to poor Mademoiselle Céleste's notion, outlandish ideas. Still, they really loved each other, and kissed affectionately.

"Well, Aunt Céleste, how do you stand Papa Bouchard's absence?" asked Léontine, jokingly, but not unkindly.

Mademoiselle Bouchard wagged her head disconsolately. "It is not how I stand it. It is how he, poor, dear boy, stands it. Who will look after his dinner and see that he has simple and wholesome food? Who will look to his flannels? Who will see that he

lays aside his books at ten o'clock and goes to bed, as he has always been accustomed?"

"It seems to me, Aunt Céleste, that as Papa Bouchard is fifty-four years of age he ought to know something about taking care of himself."

"But he doesn't. However, I have given him Pierre. I have the greatest confidence in Pierre. In thirty years I have never known him to be guilty of an indiscretion. He was very unwilling to go, poor fellow. He is truly attached to the quiet and decorum of the Rue Clarisse, and objected very much to the noise and bustle of the Rue Bassano, with so many theatres about and people turning night into day. I almost had to force him to go—but I did it on my poor, dear brother's account. Pierre is to come to see me every day to tell me just how the dear boy has passed his time."

Léontine sincerely hoped that Pierre would not think it necessary to mention her visit to Papa Bouchard the night before.

"And I have had another sorrow," continued poor Mademoiselle Bouchard. "My parrot—Pierrot—that I have had for seventeen years, and taught so many moral and useful aphorisms—he, too, has deserted me."

"All three of them vanished—like this—*pouf!*" Élise put in, with the freedom of an old servant. "Monsieur Bouchard, that good-for-nothing husband of mine and Pierrot—and all bent on mischief—that I'll swear to!"

Mademoiselle Bouchard proceeded to read Élise a lecture on the duties of the married state, among the first of which was the obligation of a wife to believe everything her husband tells her, at which Élise laughed grimly.

"Mademoiselle is joking, ha, ha!"

Although Mademoiselle Bouchard led so retired a life, she liked well enough to know what was going on in the outside world, if only to be shocked at it. So, when Léontine told her about the proposed supper at the Pigeon House that evening, Mademoiselle Bouchard was duly horrified,

terrified and mortified, but she did not forget to charge Léontine to come and tell her all the dreadful things she saw at that unconventional place.

Léontine, after spending the morning in the Rue Clarisse, returned to her own apartment in the Avenue de l'Impératrice. She was so dispirited at the contemplation of her own faults and Victor's supposed Spartan virtues that she had no heart to take her usual afternoon automobile excursion in the Bois de Boulogne—the automobile being one of the few indulgences she had been able to screw out of Papa Bouchard. She remained at home, therefore, until it was time to take the eight o'clock train for Melun. Then, taking her maid to the St. Lazare station, and directing her to be there when the eleven o'clock train from Melun returned, Léontine stepped into a first-class compartment, and was soon speeding toward Melun.

She wore a beautiful evening costume concealed by a long silk cloak, and a charming hat was perched on her dainty head. The thought in her tender little heart was of the pleasure her society would give her dear Victor.

But her dear Victor had spent the day in a manner not unlike her own. He had interviewed the proprietor of the Pigeon House and had given him assurances that the bill would be paid. The transaction had involved the mortifying admission that before the money was handed over Monsieur Bouchard would be out there himself to look into the matter, as if Captain de Meneval were a naughty schoolboy. The proprietor of the Pigeon House had scoffed heartlessly at this, and de Meneval had difficulty in keeping from knocking him down for his impudence. Then—Léontine's visit! What impish microbe had lodged in her head, inducing her to come out there? He knew her to be keen of wit, and it would be difficult to disguise from her his familiarity with the place. He might, it is true, say he knew little or nothing about it, but the waiters, especially one François, who knew his taste in wines and

cigars, fish and *entrées* and *hors d'œuvres* to a dot, would be sure to betray him. And then, the diamond necklace lay heavy on his heart and danced up and down before his eyes, for Victor de Meneval really loved his charming young wife, and argued to himself that if that stingy old hunk of a Papa Bouchard had not held him so tight the present predicament would not have existed.

However, time waits for no man; and when the eight o'clock train from Paris was due Captain de Meneval was at the little station waiting for it. And when it rolled in Léontine sprang gracefully out of her compartment.

As in the morning, each felt remorseful and penitent toward the other and tried to make up for the wrong that each had secretly done the other by renewed demonstrations of affection. When de Meneval escorted his charming wife across the street to the Pigeon House, which was only a step away, he paid her the prettiest and most loverlike compliments imaginable. Léontine responded with the sweetest smiles and the tenderest words; so that by the time they reached the terrace garden through a covered hedge next the Pigeon House itself, each felt like a thief and a murderer.

Léontine exclaimed with delight at the beauty of the terrace garden. It was indeed a pretty and cheerful place. It looked down straight into a little valley, an iron railing and a stone coping defining the terrace. Trees and shrubbery, pretty flower beds and a rustic arbor were lighted by incandescent lamps that gleamed softly in the purple glow of evening. The windows of the Pigeon House gave directly on the terrace, and already the glittering lights and the sounds of the orchestra showed that the performance was beginning. There were only a few persons scattered about, and the waiters were collected in groups, whispering, while waiting for customers. One, however—the identical François, whom de Meneval wished to avoid—ran forward and showed them a pleasant

table. He was in the act of saying, "What will Monsieur le Capitaine have?" when de Meneval, looking him straight in the face, though addressing Léontine, said:

"It's been so long since I've seen this place—not since our marriage, in fact—that I hardly know what it is like."

"Oho!" thought François, "that is your game, is it? Very well, Monsieur, I will help you out with it—for a consideration." Then, extending his hand for de Meneval's hat, he gave a slight but significant twitch of his fingers and palm, to which a ten-franc piece was the agreeable response. "Since Monsieur is evidently not familiar with this place," said the wily François, "perhaps he will allow me to recommend our white soup, to begin with."

"Thank you," replied de Meneval; "and can you also recommend this turbot on the menu?"

"Yes, Monsieur. If you had ever tasted our turbot you would never look at turbot outside of the Pigeon House."

"By the way, what is your name?"

"François, if you please."

François remembered a certain little supper at the Pigeon House the week before, when Captain de Meneval had not only forgotten François's name but his own as well, and so had several other very jolly officers. But François, though but a waiter, had the soul of a gentleman, and was nobly oblivious of ever having set eyes on Captain de Meneval before.

"Now, Victor," said Léontine, who had been studying over the wine list, "as I invited myself here to-night, I intend to be part host. I claim the right of providing the wine and cigars. They shall be of the best, as the best of husbands deserves." Then, turning to François, she said: "Your best Chambertin with the soup, and a bottle of this 1840 Bordeaux, and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot. Also, for Monsieur le Capitaine some of your Reina Regente cigars." Léontine returned to her study of the wine list and de Meneval and François exchanged

sympathetic grins. François vanished after having received a very expensive order.

Left to themselves, Léontine and Victor began to condole with each other on the prospect of their rustication.

"It is not for myself I grieve," declared Léontine; "it is for you, poor darling."

"Never mind me," protested de Meneval. "If only *you* were not condemned to that infernal little cottage! Well, we shall have one good dinner, anyhow, before we begin doing time, as it were."

And as they were exchanging their lugubrious confidences, a shriek of hoarse laughter resounded near them, and there on the arbor hung a cage with a parrot in it which Léontine immediately recognized as Pierrot. With gurgles of laughter Léontine told Victor of her visit to the Rue Clémire that morning and of the flight of Pierrot, along with that of Papa Bouchard and Pierre.

"And I shall go to-morrow morning and tell Aunt Céleste that I have seen her dear Pierrot."

"It will be cruelty to animals to take the poor devil back to the Rue Clémire," replied de Meneval.

François then returned with the soup and fish, both of which were excellent. De Meneval made a point of calling François "Louis" or "Adolphe" occasionally, and François never failed to respectfully correct him.

Meanwhile, sweet sounds of the orchestra and of singing floated out from the open windows of the Pigeon House. More people strolled on the terrace, including many officers of the garrison; and when the intermission came, a flock of girls, each escorted by a young man, generally an officer, came out, laughing and chattering, and took their places at the little tables. Some had only a glass of lemonade or wine, others had time for a pâté or some trifle of the kind. It was very pretty and picturesque, and Léontine, never having seen anything of the kind, was delighted.

De Meneval was in agony lest some of his friends among the ladies should recognize him, but they, being mostly decent and self-respecting women, though of a humble class, with true French politeness did not intrude themselves on his notice in any way. Nor was he anxious to begin a conversation with any of his brother officers, and carefully avoided noticing them beyond a bow, although many of them would have been glad of an introduction to his pretty young wife.

The dinner was outwardly very jolly, but the demon of remorse was at work within the breasts of both Victor and Léontine. Nevertheless, it did not affect their appetites, and François found he had a good deal to do. At last, however, coffee was served, and just as Léontine put down her cup a scream from the parrot resounded.

"Ah, there you are, Papa Bouchard! Up to mischief, eh, Papa Bouchard! Bad boy Bouchard!"

Now these were some of the phrases that Léontine herself, during her sojourn in the Rue Clarisse, had taught the parrot, much to her own and Papa Bouchard's amusement. The wicked bird remembered them most inopportunistly, for there was Papa Bouchard himself strolling into the garden.

"Good heavens!" cried de Meneval. "We can't afford to let Papa Bouchard see us out here. We should be sent into retirement to-morrow morning!" And obeying a mutual impulse, these two graceless creatures flew round the corner of the arbor, where they could see without being seen.

Monsieur Bouchard entered with an air of affected jauntiness which went very well with the extreme youthfulness of his attire. Apparently he had thrown all his old clothes to the winds, along with his discretion, when he decamped from the Rue Clarisse. He wore an extremely youthful suit of light gray, with a flaming necktie, a collar that nearly cut his ears off, and a watch chain that would have answered either for a watch or a dog. A huge red rose decorated his lapel, and

his scanty hair, when he removed his hat, showed marks of the curling-iron.

At the first shriek from the parrot Papa Bouchard started apprehensively. The waiters—a shrewd and vexatious lot, who never fail to notice all the slips of elderly gentlemen—immediately jumped to the right conclusion, that the elderly gentleman in youthful attire was an old acquaintance of the newly acquired parrot. Monsieur Bouchard felt, rather than saw, a simultaneous snicker go round, and rightly concluding that the best thing to do was to ignore the wicked Pierrot, walked away from the arbor, and seating himself at a table some distance away, pulled out of his pocket the *Journal des Débats* and read it diligently. The parrot, however, delighted to find an old acquaintance among so many new faces, continued to call out, at intervals, various remarks to Papa Bouchard, such as "Does the old lady know you're out?" "Oh, you are a gay bird, Papa Bouchard!" and always winding up, like a Greek chorus, with "Bad boy Bouchard!"

Presently a waiter approached and asked Monsieur Bouchard politely what he wished to be served with, and before he could ask for his usual drink, a little sugared water, the diabolical Pierrot screeched out, "An American cocktail!" which the bird pronounced "cockee-tailee." Papa Bouchard scowled. This was very annoying.

"A little sugared water, if you please," he replied to the waiter, and the bird, on hearing it, burst into a screech of hoarse laughter.

Monsieur Bouchard laid down his newspaper and looked about him with curiosity not unmixed with gratification. Everything seemed extremely jolly—these places were undoubtedly pleasant, and he was not so much surprised as he had been at de Meneval's fondness for it. At that very moment de Meneval and Léontine were watching him and counting the chances of slipping out without being caught. But Papa Bouchard, quite

unconscious of this, was becoming more and more interested in what was going on before him and around him. "At these places, though," he was thinking, "one should have a companion—a person of the other sex—someone to help one enjoy—it's dreary trying to be happy alone." And as if in answer to his thought, he saw, entering the garden in both haste and embarrassment, the charming Madame Vernet.

Now a curious thing happened—a psychologic mystery. All day long Monsieur Bouchard had been haunted and troubled by the thought of Madame Vernet and the paste necklace. She had not returned it. So much he knew from his first look at Pierre's countenance when he had got home that afternoon. But the minute he saw the lady herself, in his pleased flutter and twitter of enjoyment, the necklace vanished from his consciousness; he remembered only that she was pretty, she was young, she was demure and she was easily alarmed. In fact, Madame Vernet appeared to be scared half to death at this very instant, and as soon as she caught sight of Monsieur Bouchard she fled toward him like a frightened bird.

"Oh, Monsieur Bouchard!" she said, panting and agitated, "how relieved I am to find you here! I had an appointment to meet my uncle and aunt here—you remember I told you I had an uncle and aunt living at Melun whom I often visited—and not seeing them outside I took it for granted they were inside, and so came in. I felt terribly embarrassed—I am so diffident, you know—at entering such a place alone, but I expected every moment to see them, and when I did not I thought I should have fainted from sheer terror—you can't imagine what a timid little thing I am—and then my eyes fell on you, and I said to myself: 'There is that dear, good, handsome Monsieur Bouchard—he is the very man to take care of a poor, terrified woman'—and so I ran to you." Madame Vernet dropped on a chair at Monsieur Bouchard's table.

What man with a soul as big as the

head of a pin could refuse succor to a pretty woman under these circumstances! Not Papa Bouchard.

"My dear Madame Vernet," he said, "pray compose yourself. I will take care of you until your uncle and aunt arrive."

Madame Vernet looked around apprehensively.

"I don't see my uncle and aunt," she murmured—which was perfectly true—"and I am afraid, very much afraid, Monsieur Bouchard, that your youthful appearance really unfits you for the office of chaperon."

Oh, how happy was Papa Bouchard at that! With liberty seemed to have come youth—with youth should come champagne. Papa Bouchard called the waiter back and changed his order from a glass of sugared water to a quart of extra dry Veuve Clicquot.

"Now," said he, playfully taking up Madame Vernet's fan, "don't worry your little head about your uncle and aunt. I'll be your uncle and aunt for this evening. I'm sure I have been told by a number of persons—members of my own family—that the Pigeon House is a perfectly respectable place. So let us have a pleasant evening here, and I will take you back to Paris by the eleven o'clock train."

"Oh, Monsieur Bouchard, there is nothing I should like better, but I am afraid—"

"Don't, don't be afraid. There isn't the least chance of anyone I know turning up. I have a young jackanapes of a family connection stationed here—a young officer—but I think I have pretty effectually shut the door of the Pigeon House in *his* face."

At that very moment this young jackanapes of an officer was watching and listening to Papa Bouchard with the most entrancing delight. So was Léontine, who could not refrain from pinching de Meneval in her ecstasy. The enjoyment of these two young scapegraces was enhanced at this very moment by the parrot screaming out:

"Oh, naughty old Bouchard! I'll

tell the old lady! Bad boy Bouchard!"

Madame Vernet started and looked inquiringly at the bird. Papa Bouchard was seriously vexed.

"Pray," he said, in an annoyed voice, "don't pay any attention to that ridiculous bird. I always thought parrots were the incarnation of the devil. I can't imagine how the creature found out my name. At all events," he added, tenderly, "neither bird nor devil, neither man nor woman, not even your aunt and uncle, can spoil the evening for us."

"I don't think my aunt and uncle can be coming," replied Madame Vernet. And she spoke the truth.

"So much the better," whispered Papa Bouchard.

The waiter, the same astute François who had waited on de Meneval and Léontine, now appeared with the champagne. Monsieur Bouchard had not thought of ordering anything to eat, but when this artful François said to him, "Did Monsieur ask for a menu card?" Monsieur Bouchard replied, promptly, "Certainly I did."

The menu was brought, and Monsieur Bouchard, with his head close to Madame Vernet's, studied it attentively. His order as finally made out would have caused an earthquake in the Rue Clarisse. He ordered everything that had been strictly forbidden during the last thirty years. The order bore, too, a really remarkable resemblance to the one given by the de Menevals, except that those happy-go-lucky young people had not the money to pay for it, and Monsieur Bouchard had.

Never in all his life had Papa Bouchard enjoyed a supper as much as that one. He was at perfect liberty to eat and drink all the things that were certain to make him feel ill the next day, a prerogative dear to a man's heart. He had a charming woman opposite him, and a waiter who fairly overwhelmed him with attentions. Without an order from Monsieur Bouchard, François produced the wine appropriate to every course, and instead of being frowned

on was rewarded for it. But in spite of white wines and red wines, Papa Bouchard stuck pretty close to the champagne, which speedily got into his tongue and his eyes as well as into his blood. It was the champagne that made him squeeze Madame Vernet's hand under the table, wink at François and kiss his fingers to one of the young ladies of the ballet, who responded by playfully throwing a bouquet to him which hit him on the nose. In fact, his enjoyment would have been entirely without alloy but for Pierrot, who, slyly inspired by the waiters, kept up a running fire of remarks, always ending in a shrill laugh and a yell of "Bad boy Bouchard!"

If Pierrot bothered Papa Bouchard slightly, he added immensely to the suppressed gaiety of the two listeners, de Meneval and Léontine, and they went off into spasms of silent laughter whenever Pierrot screamed out any appropriate remark.

Papa Bouchard, however, got a good deal of solid enjoyment out of his supper in spite of his old friend of the Rue Clarisse, and Pierrot did not interfere in the least with Madame Vernet's pleasure.

"The fact is," said Monsieur Bouchard, confidentially, to Madame Vernet, after the third glass of champagne, "I wasn't quite candid about that devilish bird." Papa Bouchard used this wicked word with the greatest relish. "It belonged to my sister—older than I—who brought me up in the way I should go, and a deuced dull and uncomfortable way it was! A day or two ago, Pierrot—that's the parrot's name—got tired of the propriety and seclusion of the Rue Clarisse, where we have lived for thirty years, just as Pierre, my manservant, did, and I myself. All at once, without previous consultation, Pierre, Pierrot and I levanted, so to speak. Pierrot has evidently got caught—which is more than I intend to be—but I'm sure he finds the Pigeon House a great improvement on the Rue Clarisse, and I haven't

the heart to return him there. You don't know how pleasant it is to be living in the Rue Bassano after thirty years in the Rue Clisse. And to be my own man, instead of my sister's—excellent woman she is, excellent, but she doesn't understand what a young man of the present day—er—I mean a man with the feelings of youth, requires to make him happy. So that's why I eloped."

"It's a great mistake not to give a man his head sometimes," added Madame Vernet, with one of her gentle and winning smiles.

"Yes, yes, yes. You know how to manage a man, I see."

"I manage a man!" cried Madame Vernet. "Pray don't say that. The idea of my managing a great, strong man! No, indeed! All I should ask of a man is that he would manage me—and I'm sure, as yielding as I am, nothing would be easier."

At which François, behind Monsieur Bouchard's chair, doubled up with laughter, and Léontine had to fan de Meneval, who appeared to be choking in an agony of enjoyment, while Pierrot varied his performance by beginning to sing the song from the opera, "Ah, I have sighed to rest me!"

"Well," continued Papa Bouchard, whose *bonhomie* increased with every sip of champagne, "I suppose I shall have to manage a woman some day, for, to be very confidential, my dear Madame Vernet, I am in an excellent position to marry, and after a while I think I shall not be satisfied with liberty. I shall want power, too—the power of controlling another destiny, another heart, another will besides my own; so I shall marry a wife." Papa Bouchard said this with an air of the greatest determination, swelling out his waistcoat, and at the same moment the parrot shrieked out laughing, "Oh, how funny!"

"What's that? What's that?" cried Monsieur Bouchard, indignantly, turning to François. He was a little confused by the champagne and Madame Vernet's bright eyes.

"If you please, Monsieur, it is that

troublesome parrot. I shall tell the proprietor how very annoying the bird is—he has only just got it—and I am sure to-morrow morning it will be sent away."

Monsieur Bouchard had to be satisfied with this. His enjoyment, however, was now too deep for Pierrot to ruffle except for a moment. Monsieur Bouchard was living—living cycles of time, and life was taking on a color, an exuberance, a melody that quite turned his otherwise excellent head. He was delighted with Madame Vernet's exposition of her inability and indisposition to manage a man. "That's the sort of wife I'll have when I marry," he thought to himself, taking another shy at the champagne. "None of your managing sort—I've been managed too much already, heaven knows." And inspired by these pleasing reflections, he said, tenderly, to Madame Vernet, offering her his arm:

"Come, Madame, let us take a little stroll in search of your uncle and aunt. Do you see that sweet, retired little alley, all roses and myrtles and honeysuckles, with a lot of cooing pigeons nestling among them? Perhaps we may find your uncle and aunt amid the roses."

Madame Vernet hung her head, but Papa Bouchard insisted. When at last she rose she threw aside the graceful little wrap round her shoulders, and there, gleaming on her throat, was the paste necklace.

Monsieur Bouchard received a distinct and unpleasant shock as he recognized the troublesome object, and he was nowise relieved by Madame Vernet saying, in her softest and most insinuating manner:

"How charming it was of you to give me this lovely ornament!"

Monsieur Bouchard would have dropped Madame Vernet's arm, but she held on to him. This was certainly a very disagreeable incident. He had not given her the necklace—he never dreamed of giving it to her—he had been very much annoyed at her failure to return it, and . . .

But what were Monsieur Bouchard's

feelings in comparison with those of Léontine and de Meneval, both of whom were watching every movement of Papa Bouchard and Madame Vernet? Their laughing faces changed like magic. They stood—Léontine and Victor—horror-stricken, and as if turned to stone, each pale, trembling and afraid to meet the eye of the other. But as, after a minute or two of agonized surprise, they began to recover from the first shock of their discovery, they felt the necessity of concealing their feelings from each other, and at the same time not losing sight of the twenty-thousand-franc necklace.

Léontine, womanlike, was the first to rally. She was quite pale—de Meneval was not sure whether she had recognized the necklace or not, and he was afraid to ask. Her voice trembled slightly as she said:

“I think I'll go and speak to Papa Bouchard. It will be such—such fun to let him know we have been watching him all the time.”

Out of sheer stupidity, and being thoroughly disconcerted, de Meneval walked along with her toward Monsieur Bouchard and Madame Vernet. Léontine jumped to the conclusion that he suspected something. So she stopped short and said, in a voice that she vainly tried to make laughing and merry:

“Let me have Papa Bouchard to myself—it will be the more amusing if you appear later on.”

“Certainly,” replied de Meneval, and continued to walk with her toward Papa Bouchard and Madame Vernet. The fact is, he had not heard a word of what Léontine was saying. Papa Bouchard was standing in front of Madame Vernet, and his countenance showed that all was not at ease within. She had asked him to button her glove, and he could not well refuse, but the sight of the necklace was rather trying to his nerves. And in the midst of it appeared the two human beings he least desired to see on earth—Léontine and de Meneval!

The three stood looking at each

other like a trio of criminals. Madame Vernet, the blushing, the bashful, the diffident, was the only one of the four who was not cruelly embarrassed. And then, besides the infernal necklace—for so Papa Bouchard characterized it in his new vocabulary—the idea of being caught supping with a lady at the Pigeon House! Suppose those two scamps should fly off to the Rue Clémire with the gruesome tale—and he didn't know exactly how much champagne he had taken, only his head was buzzing a little—poor, poor Papa Bouchard! However, it would never do to show the white feather in the beginning; the champagne had given him some Dutch courage, but it did not supply him with any judgment, for his first remark was about the most indiscreet he could have made. Assuming, or trying to assume, his usual authoritative air, he said to de Meneval:

“Monsieur le Capitaine, I thought there was a distinct understanding between us that there were to be no more suppers at the Pigeon House. And bringing your wife to this place—”

“I know of no such understanding, Monsieur Bouchard,” replied de Meneval, with some spirit. “I deny your right, or that of any other man, to say where I shall have supper with my wife. If the Pigeon House is proper enough for you and this lady—” de Meneval indicated Madame Vernet, who, with her usual bashfulness, had retired a little—“whom I overheard just now thanking you for the superb necklace she wears, it is assuredly proper for me and for my wife.”

This was unanswerable logic, and Papa Bouchard was momentarily staggered by it. De Meneval followed up his advantage by saying, significantly, “To-morrow morning I shall come to see you, and you will kindly explain to me some mysteries concerning—” De Meneval stopped short; he could not speak his mind to Monsieur Bouchard without letting the terrible and menacing cat out of the bag regarding the necklace.

It was now Léontine's turn at the poor gentleman.

"Come, Papa Bouchard," she said, with pallid lips, but affecting to laugh, "you must not scold Victor for bringing me here. I really made him do it. But I want to speak to you a moment in that sweet, sequestered arbor, where you told this lady just now she might find her uncle and aunt, amid the roses and honeysuckles and the little cooing pigeons."

Monsieur Bouchard would much rather have gone off with a gendarme at that very moment, but Léontine had him by the arm, and was determinedly dragging him away. An anxious grin appeared on his countenance as he turned to Madame Vernet and said:

"One moment, Madame, and I will return."

"Only a moment, remember," answered the bashful creature.

Madame Vernet had not the slightest objection to being left in charge of this good-looking young officer. She cast down her eyes and began to murmur something about her timidity, when she was brought up all standing by de Meneval saying:

"Madame, a few minutes ago I overheard you thanking Monsieur Bouchard for that superb necklace you wear."

Madame Vernet smiled. Superb necklace, indeed! It must be a fine imitation.

"But," continued de Meneval, "that necklace belongs to my wife, Madame de Meneval. I myself selected it, and paid twenty thousand francs for it. Last night I left it in Monsieur Bouchard's care in the Rue Bassano. To-night I find you, a woman with whom, I am sure, Monsieur Bouchard has a very casual acquaintance, wearing my wife's twenty-thousand-franc necklace. You will admit that the circumstances justify me in demanding it."

"Monsieur," replied Madame Vernet, "this necklace is paste. It cost only seventy-five francs. I have Monsieur Bouchard's word for it."

"The old sinner! Well, Monsieur

Bouchard wasn't saying his prayers when he told you that. I tell you the stones are real, and unless you hand the necklace over to me this instant I shall telephone for a couple of policemen—there is a police station not two minutes away—and to-morrow morning you and Monsieur Bouchard can explain the matter in the police court."

Now, Madame Vernet was really as brave as a lion. She suspected at once that she had got hold of something of real value, and she determined to hold on to it and get away with it; hence nothing could have been more pleasing to her at that moment than to have de Meneval out of the way for a few moments—even to fetch a policeman—so she merely replied, with calm assurance:

"Do as you like, Monsieur. I never saw you before—I hope I shall never see you again. My protector is at hand, and when you arrive with your police officers it is Monsieur Bouchard with whom you will have to settle."

De Meneval turned and ran out of the garden toward the police station. He thought that exposure was coming anyhow, and he would better secure the stakes in the game. As he rushed out he caromed against a very well dressed, portly, clean-shaven, elderly gentleman who was parading into the garden with a great air of pomposity. In his hand he held conspicuously a newspaper, on the first page of which was a large photogravure easily recognizable as himself, and under it, in letters an inch long, were the words, "Dr. Delcassee. The most celebrated alienist in Paris." Below this was the cut of a handsome building, and under this was inscribed, "The Private Sanatorium at Melun of Dr. Delcassee."

Dr. Delcassee seemed to feel the injury to his dignity very much when de Meneval jostled by him so unceremoniously, nearly knocking him down. He stopped, scowled, growled, and then, with a portentous air of being much displeased, stalked forward, took a seat close to where Madame

Vernet was standing, and began pompously to unfold his newspaper, always keeping the picture to his audience, so to speak—which audience consisted solely of Madame Vernet.

Now, for quickness and boldness of resource Madame Vernet was fully the equal of de Meneval or any man alive, and the moment she became convinced of the identity of Dr. Delcasse a plan was formed in her mind. Everybody knew Dr. Delcasse, and also of the war waged between him and Dr. Vignaud, another celebrated alienist, which, if carried to extremes, would have resulted in locking up half the population of Paris as lunatics either in Dr. Delcasse's sanatorium at Melun or Dr. Vignaud's private hospital in Paris.

Madame Vernet realized, in her brilliant scheme, the value of time. There was a train leaving for Paris in ten minutes. If she could but make the first train, getting away before Monsieur Bouchard returned! She determined to at least try for it. She came near to Dr. Delcasse, and said, in a silvery voice:

"May I ask if this is not the renowned Dr. Delcasse—the man who has restored the largest number of persons, cured and sane, to their families, of any doctor for the insane in the whole world?"

To this insinuating address from a remarkably pretty and attractive woman Dr. Delcasse, as would any other man, felt a warming of the heart, and he replied, rising politely:

"You flatter me. I am Dr. Delcasse."

"Then," cried Madame Vernet, taking out her handkerchief and preparing to weep, "you are the man I most desire to meet. Oh, how fortunate it is for me that you are here! I have a brother with me—a dear, good young man, but whose mind has been affected ever since a fall he had from an apricot tree some years ago. For a year I had him at Dr. Vignaud's hospital for the insane—rightly named, for I think anyone who went there would shortly be insane. Dr. Vignaud

is a charlatan of the worst description." Dr. Delcasse smiled in a superior manner to hear himself praised and Dr. Vignaud reviled—how delicious! "I am my poor brother's guardian," continued Madame Vernet, producing her card, inscribed "Madame Vernet, *née* Brion." "My brother's name is Louis Brion. Ever since he was released from Dr. Vignaud's asylum he has been much crazier than when he went in, although Dr. Vignaud declared him thoroughly cured."

"Just like Vignaud!" remarked Dr. Delcasse, with that spirit of fraternity which sometimes distinguishes the medical profession.

"This evening," continued Madame Vernet, throwing her most pleading and fascinating look into her eyes, "I brought my poor, dear brother out to this place to supper, thinking it would divert him. But he has been quite insane in all his actions, and just now he became violent. He took it into his head that this necklace I wear—which I may say to you confidentially is paste—is real, and is worth twenty thousand francs, and that I have stolen it from his wife. The poor boy has no wife. And while I was trying to soothe him just now he suddenly broke away, nearly knocking you down as you came in, and declared he was going after the police to arrest me—*me*, his devoted sister!" Madame Vernet's voice became lost in her lace handkerchief.

"I saw an unmistakable gleam of insanity in his eye as he rushed by me," said Dr. Delcasse, promptly. "My experience, Madame, has been vast. I can tell an insane patient at a glance, and I have no hesitation in saying that the young man gave every indication to a practiced eye of being, as you say, very much unbalanced. And Vignaud said he was cured! Ha, ha!"

"But the great thing," said Madame Vernet, with real and not pretended anxiety, "is to get him away from here without scandal, and into your sanatorium, where I wish to place him under your care. How can that be managed?"

"Nothing easier, Madame," replied Dr. Delcasse, eager to get hold of one of Dr. Vignaud's patients. "I am well known here—indeed, I am personally acquainted with many of our police officers. When the young man returns with the officers I shall simply, with your permission, direct them to convey him to my sanatorium—it is less than half a mile from here—and I will telephone to my assistant to have a strait-jacket, a padded cell and a cold douche ready for the unfortunate young man, and we will take care of him, never fear. When I release him, depend upon it, he will be actually cured. I am not Dr. Vignaud, I beg you to believe."

At this moment de Meneval, with a couple of officers, was entering the garden. The police station, as he had said, was but two minutes away. Dr. Delcasse, accompanied by Madame Vernet, coolly advanced, and recognizing the officers, spoke to them civilly, saying:

"Good-evening, Lestocq; good-evening, Caron." And then to de Meneval he said, soothingly: "Good-evening, Monsieur Brion. I am pleased to see you and your charming sister at Melun, and think you will enjoy your stay with me."

De Meneval looked from one to the other in amazement, and opened his mouth to speak; but before he could get out a word Madame Vernet laid her hand on his arm and said, in the tone of soothing a raving lunatic:

"Yes, dear Louis, Dr. Delcasse will take the best possible care of you, and I will come out to see you every week."

De Meneval found his tongue then.

"To the devil with Dr. Delcasse! I never heard of him before. Police, arrest this woman. I can prove by my wife and by a gentleman now in this garden that the diamond necklace this person wears is the property of my wife."

"Do nothing of the kind," interrupted Dr. Delcasse, with quiet authority. "This young man, Louis Brion, is the brother of this lady, Madame Vernet. He is demented,

and his latest hallucination is that Madame Vernet has stolen the necklace she wears; that it is worth twenty thousand francs, that she stole it from his wife—and he has no wife."

"But I tell you," shouted de Meneval, quite beside himself, "that I never saw this woman before. She has my wife's diamond necklace, and I can prove it. Call Monsieur Bouchard!"

"You see how it is," coolly remarked Dr. Delcasse to the two police officers, "the only thing is to get him out of the way as quietly as possible. I shall take him at once out to my sanatorium, where I shall have a strait-jacket, a padded cell and a cold douche waiting for him."

With this the doctor suddenly whipped out his silk handkerchief, and with the greatest ingenuity bound it fast round de Meneval's mouth, so that he was completely gagged and silenced. The police officers seized him and dragged him out, under Dr. Delcasse's direction. De Meneval fought like a tiger, but it was one to three. The struggle, though violent, was noiseless, and before the two or three waiters in the vicinity realized what was going on everything was over, and Madame Vernet, picking up her gloves, fan and other belongings, scurried off another way to make the ten o'clock train.

Meanwhile, the interview between Papa Bouchard and Léontine had been stormy. Léontine had demanded an explanation, but Papa Bouchard had no satisfactory one to give. At first he mounted his high horse, declared Léontine's suspicions intolerable, and refused to discuss the subject of the necklace at all. But she was not so easily put off.

"If you refuse me an explanation," she said at last, "I shall simply confess all to Victor, and you will have to treat with a man instead of a woman."

"Do; confess all to Victor," replied Papa Bouchard, tartly. "Tell him that sociological yarn you told me. But remember one thing—your confessing all to Victor won't get your debts paid."

At this Léontine burst into tears, which partially softened Monsieur Bouchard, who really had a good heart.

"Come, come, now," he said. "You had better take my word for it when I tell you that, in spite of appearances, your necklace is safe. I can't and won't tell you the circumstances—you and de Meneval would both blazon it over Paris, and it would be devilish uncomfortable—" Papa Bouchard was becoming expert in the use of bad language—"it would be devilish uncomfortable for me. I can straighten the whole thing out in a few days, if you will only keep quiet. *Can't you keep quiet?*"

"I'll try to," was poor Léontine's response, and with this meagre satisfaction Papa Bouchard persuaded her to return to the garden. He was exceedingly eager to get back; he had a suspicion that Madame Vernet was anxious to get out of the way. In the perplexities and annoyances of the last half-hour he had made up his mind that it was absolutely necessary to get that diabolical necklace back, and to work himself out of the scrape in which he unexpectedly found himself.

As soon as he returned to the garden he looked around keenly for Madame Vernet, but she was nowhere to be seen. He called up François, who reported that Madame Vernet had gone out in a great hurry. There was a train for Paris just leaving. It struck him Madame was trying to make that train. Such was precisely Monsieur Bouchard's idea. Her departure in this way seriously annoyed and alarmed him. One thing, however, was clear in his mind—he must get back to Paris as soon as possible. There was another train in twenty minutes, and then there would be no more till eleven.

De Meneval's disappearance was also strange, but just as Léontine was beginning to feel uncomfortable she saw de Meneval approaching. Something had evidently happened. He looked angry and excited, and his usually immaculate dress showed that

he had been in a scrimmage. By his side walked the portly, the imposing Dr. Delcasse. The doctor was apologizing to de Meneval with the utmost earnestness.

"My dear sir, I beg you will believe it was a most extraordinary mistake—"

"*Very extraordinary!*" replied de Meneval, grinding his teeth with rage.

"If I had succeeded in getting you into my sanatorium you would have found every comfort awaiting you."

"Yes, a strait-jacket, a cold douche and a padded cell, as you kindly promised me."

"May I ask, Monsieur, that you will not spread this unfortunate story abroad in Paris?"

"I shall have it printed in every newspaper in Paris to-morrow morning, and I shall myself write to Dr. Vignaud, giving him a detailed account of the affair."

"Good heavens!"

"And if insanity ever develops in my family, it is Dr. Vignaud who shall treat every case—every case, do you hear?"

"Then, sir," said Dr. Delcasse, angrily, "all I have to say is that Dr. Vignaud will find his first patient in you—and I have the honor to bid you good-evening."

"Go to the devil!"

Dr. Delcasse, slapping his hat down angrily on his head, marched indignant out, and de Meneval, still furious at the treatment to which he had been subjected, poured out his injuries:

"And but for having been recognized by some of the waiters as I was being dragged away I should at this moment be an inmate of a lunatic asylum, sent there by the wiles of a shameless adventuress, brought to the Pigeon House by Monsieur Bouchard." This was de Meneval's exact language.

"Take care, sir; take care!" cried Papa Bouchard, in a voice trembling with wrath. He was not accustomed to being talked to in that manner. "You may repent of this language. Madame Vernet is a lady of means

and respectability. I did not bring her out here. She came expecting to find here her uncle and aunt, who live in Melun. I invited her to sup in a public place, as any gentleman is authorized to do in the case of a widow old enough to take care of herself, and because your suspicions were excited by her having on a necklace like that you bought for your wife, you proceeded to make trouble. Well, it seems she turned the tables on you very cleverly, and no doubt, being a bashful little thing, she dreaded the sensation it would make and the notoriety that might follow, and—and so, naturally, has gone." Then, turning to Léontine, Papa Bouchard played his trump card. "Haven't you your diamond necklace safe at home, Léontine?"

To which Léontine faltered: "Y—y—yes, Papa Bouchard."

"Well, then," cried Papa Bouchard, assuming an air of triumphant virtue to poor de Meneval, "I hope you see the enormity of your conduct."

"I can't say I do," sullenly replied de Meneval.

"Very well, very well," continued Papa Bouchard, realizing that he held all the trumps in the game. "Do you want to go into the whole business of this necklace? If you do there is no time like the present. Do you, Léontine, want the matter sifted to the bottom?"

De Meneval remained gloomily silent, while Léontine murmured, "N—no, Papa Bouchard."

Papa Bouchard, having thus effectually silenced both of them, felt master of the situation, but all the same, he was desperately anxious to reach Paris before the de Menevals, so that he could get on Madame Vernet's track before they should. He was pretty sure that she could not get away from her apartment without leaving some trace. There was another train going almost immediately, and there would be no more till eleven o'clock. It would be exceedingly convenient for him to get an hour's start of the de Menevals. So it occurred to him that if he were

to propose a little more champagne Léontine and de Meneval would never run away and leave it, but *he* could and would.

"Now," said he, with an air of benevolence, "everything having been straightened out about the necklace, suppose we crack a bottle of champagne before returning to Paris. Here, waiter!"

François immediately responded with a bottle of champagne.

De Meneval had never supposed that anything would be too pressing to drag him away from good champagne, but he inwardly swore, as Léontine silently fretted, at the delay that might prevent him from making the next train to Paris. Both of them gulped down the champagne rather than drank it, while Papa Bouchard, alleging that he had already taken several glasses, declined any more. Every moment or two he looked at his watch, and he said to Léontine:

"Will you be going back to Paris to-night, Léontine?"

"Indeed I shall," eagerly replied Léontine. "I shall go back with you."

"But I sha'n't be going back till the midnight train. You see I am beginning to keep late hours, to make up for lost time, and that will be too late for you. Why can't you remain at de Meneval's quarters?"

"I have an engagement early to-morrow morning," replied Léontine, who was determined to get to Paris as quickly as she could and make some private inquiries on her own account concerning Madame Vernet. The same intention was fixed in de Meneval's mind. Therefore he said:

"Never mind, Léontine; I am off duty till twelve o'clock to-morrow, and I will take you to Paris to-night, if you wish."

At which Léontine, looking very blank, replied:

"Oh, very well. That will be nice."

"Now why are you in such a hurry to get to Paris?" asked Papa Bouchard. "The next train is always crowded—not a seat to be had in a first-class

compartment for love or money, and it makes a stop of only two minutes and a half; unless one is already at the station it is almost impossible to make it, and you see it is now within a few minutes of the train."

While Monsieur Bouchard was speaking he was putting on his gloves and making for the garden door, and the de Menevals, each carefully avoiding an appearance of haste, were following him. Everybody had forgotten that the champagne was not paid for, except François.

"So," kept on Papa Bouchard, still edging away, "you will go by the late train; perhaps I'll wait for it myself."

At that moment the shriek of the locomotive resounded. Immediately all pretense of waiting for the other train vanished. All three of them bolted for the exit to the garden. François rushed after them, bawling, "Your bill, Monsieur—the champagne—and the tip—" while the parrot, suddenly wakened from a nap, uttered a screech of hoarse laughter and began to yell after Papa Bouchard's rapidly retreating figure:

"Bad boy Bouchard! bad boy Bouchard!"

III

ANYONE who saw Monsieur Bouchard a week after his adventures at the Pigeon House would have said that the excellent man had grown ten years older in that time. For he had endured more cares, anxieties, worries, vexations, apprehensions and palpitations in that one week in the Rue Bassano than in all his thirty years in the Rue Clarisse. Not that Monsieur Bouchard had the slightest desire to go back to his old life. Not at all. In the Rue Bassano he at least lived; in the Rue Clarisse he had merely vegetated.

In the first place, on his arrival at his apartment shortly after midnight on that fateful evening spent at Melun he had been unable to find out anything at all about Madame Vernet. The *concierge* had gone to

bed when he got home, and he dared not disturb the whole house at that hour. He spent a sleepless night, with Pierre snoring peacefully in the next room. The fellow had not come home till two o'clock in the morning. Monsieur Bouchard utilized the watches of the night in making up a story to tell the *concierge* to account for the inquiries he meant to make concerning Madame Vernet. A *concierge*, he well knew, is the nearest approach to an omniscient being on this planet. It was comparatively easy to concoct a tale that would go on four legs, in the expressive phrase of his countrymen—Monsieur Bouchard was greatly pleased with his shrewdness when he paused to think of the facility with which he invented his story—but to get it accepted at its face value—ah, that was another thing.

At six o'clock in the morning he tiptoed down stairs in his dressing gown and slippers. The *concierge*, yawning, was just opening the shutters in her little den.

"Can you tell me, my good woman," said Monsieur Bouchard, in a manner calculated to allay any suspicions the *concierge* might have—if anything can allay the suspicions of a *concierge*—"whether Madame Vernet arrived here last night—in fact, if she is in the house at present? I ask because I promised her aunt and uncle out at Melun last evening to escort her in, and by some accident we became separated in the railway station, and I am considering what apology I shall make to her aunt and uncle—very worthy people at Melun."

The *concierge* looked at poor Monsieur Bouchard, not with suspicion, but with certainty in her eye. The very expression of her face called him a liar and a villain, as she replied, coolly:

"Madame Vernet *did* come in last night and left the house at five o'clock this morning, to visit her aunt and uncle at Châlons."

By which Monsieur Bouchard, who was no fool, found out three things:

first, that Madame Vernet had been beforehand with the *concierge*; second, that Madame Vernet did not have an aunt and uncle at Châlons, although she seemed to have uncles and aunts in every town, village and hamlet in France; and third, that wherever she might be she certainly was not at Châlons.

He spent the next three days in vain efforts to find out Madame Vernet's whereabouts. The *concierge* had evidently been thoroughly bought and coached, and would absolutely tell nothing. Madame Vernet had taken her apartment by the month, and had paid in advance. The *concierge* knew no more. Not even a ten-franc piece could screw any additional information out of her.

Papa Bouchard began to feel a little frightened. What would happen if it should come out in the newspapers, for example, that he, Monsieur Paul Bouchard, advocate, had given away the duplicate of his ward's necklace to this person? For he was then beginning to have some doubts of Madame Vernet, diffident and retiring though she might be. When this thought occurred to him he bit the pillows in his anguish—it was in the middle of one of his sleepless nights. And what glee would those laughing devils of newspaper men have out of him! And how should he ever show his face in the Rue Clarisse? Monsieur Bouchard made up his mind that if ever the thing got into the newspapers he should emigrate to Tonquin.

Of course, Pierre knew all about it. Monsieur Bouchard had told him too much not to tell him more. Pierre was only moderately sympathetic, which infuriated Monsieur Bouchard.

"At least," cried the poor gentleman, "those two scamps, Léontine and de Meneval, are in as much trouble as I am."

"But they have the necklace," replied Pierre, "and it seems to me that Monsieur is in a jolly hole, with his necklaces and his widows, and all the rest of it."

Monsieur Bouchard, at this, burst into a string of bad words that were

very reprehensible, but perfectly natural to a man in his imminent circumstances.

However Pierre might choose to devil his master in private, in public he was unflinchingly loyal to him. In the first place, Léontine and de Meneval, each determined to force an explanation from Monsieur Bouchard, haunted the Rue Bassano, and when they did not come they wrote. It was easy enough to dispose of the frantic notes and letters, but when the two came—always separately—and Léontine wept and raved that she would and must see Papa Bouchard, and de Meneval swore and stormed to the same effect, Pierre was immovable. Monsieur was one day at Passy, another he was at Versailles, always on important business, and Pierre never had the least idea when he would be home. Thus, by unceasing vigilance and an unabashed front, Pierre managed to stave off an interview between his master and the de Menevals for the whole of a critical week.

Papa Bouchard, however, felt the necessity of doing something to prevent an open outbreak with either Léontine or her husband. So on two occasions he sent them each a cheque—not enough to pay their bills, but in the nature of throwing a tub to a whale.

Mademoiselle Bouchard was easier to manage. Pierre went to the Rue Clarisse daily, with a very acceptable tale about Monsieur Bouchard being so busy making the will of a rich old gentleman at Passy that he had no time for anything else; likewise, that he was finding the noise and commotion of the Rue Bassano so objectionable that he bitterly regretted having left the Rue Clarisse. This little romance took so well that Pierre improved on it by saying that Monsieur Bouchard was trying to submit the apartment, so he could return to peace and quiet in the Rue Clarisse. Mademoiselle Bouchard was touched, charmed, delighted to hear this.

Not so Élise. She was not of a

trusting or confiding nature. When Pierre turned up, late in the day, yawning, and still only half-awake, she did not believe in the least his account of being kept awake by the noise of the carts and carriages in the Rue Bassano. She boldly taxed him with leading a riotous life, which Pierre strenuously denied, and going to Mademoiselle Bouchard, actually wept over Élise's want of confidence in him after thirty years of married life. Mademoiselle sharply rebuked Élise, and ordered her henceforth to believe everything Pierre told her. Élise made no reply to this beyond her usual sniff, but privately resolved the first day she had time to slip around to the Rue Bassano and interview the *concierge*. She knew the ways of *concierges* as well as the ways of men.

For four days Monsieur Bouchard gave himself, body and bones, to the business of a private detective in trying to locate Madame Vernet. Vain effort! He of course expected to have to pay handsomely for the return of the paste necklace, but he valued his peace of mind more than money, and was ready enough to come down with some cash provided he could get hold of the necklace.

On the fifth day he was delighted, but scarcely surprised, to receive a letter from Madame Vernet saying that, as there seemed to be some complications concerning the necklace he had so generously and sweetly given her, and as she was a person of much delicacy of feeling, she was seriously thinking of returning it. He could address her at the Pigeon House at Melun.

Monsieur Bouchard replied by writing and flatly offering her five hundred francs, six times the original value of the necklace. He himself took his letter out to the Pigeon House, and spent the entire evening there, on the chance that Madame Vernet might turn up. She did not, however. Next day he received a letter from her, all reproaches and hysterics; how could he offer her money!—her, the most disinterested,

the most retiring of her sex! Money was nothing to her, least of all a trifling sum of five hundred francs. Monsieur Bouchard promptly replied, increasing his offer to a thousand francs. Another deeply injured note from Madame Vernet. At last, after five days of continual negotiation, Monsieur Bouchard haunting the Pigeon House every evening, terms were arranged—two thousand francs in exchange for the necklace.

It was infamous, but as Pierre reminded Monsieur Bouchard, one must always pay for one's indiscretions. It would seem as if Madame Vernet had the direct inspiration of Satan himself in dealing with the too amiable and too susceptible Monsieur Bouchard. Not only had she given her address all along as the Pigeon House, but she appointed that abode of gaiety and champagne as the rendezvous where she was to meet Monsieur Bouchard and hand over the necklace in return for two thousand francs in notes of the Bank of France—Madame Vernet specified that there should be no cheque in the affair; she was so diffident, it always embarrassed her to go to a bank, and notes could be passed anywhere.

But Monsieur Bouchard was not wholly without discretion. He concluded he would rather not be seen in the act of handing over the money to Madame Vernet. Pierre—the foxy Pierre—should give her the money and should receive the necklace. So, on the evening specified, the two took the train for Melun, and went rattling out of Paris without dreaming of what was brewing behind them and likewise stewing ahead of them.

It was simply this: Élise had that evening found her opportunity to go round to the Rue Bassano, and in five minutes she had discovered everything Monsieur Bouchard and Pierre had been doing since they left the Rue Clarisse. The *concierge* knew all about the chase after Madame Vernet, the continual trotting out to Melun—nay, she knew that both Pierre and his master had an appointment with Madame Vernet

at the Pigeon House that very evening. Élise returned, boiling with rage, to the Rue Clémire, and with face and eyes blazing recounted to the trembling and agitated Mademoiselle Bouchard the horrid story of the frightful goings on in the Rue Bassano. And she had for audience not only poor Mademoiselle Bouchard, but Léontine de Meneval, who happened to be paying her weekly visit to the Rue Clémire. Léontine scarcely heard Élise's fierce denunciations of the two reprobates in the Rue Bassano; all she really took in was the correspondence and the running to and fro about the necklace. She flew from the apartment, leaving Mademoiselle Bouchard in a state of collapse on the sofa, while Élise retailed every circumstance of horror she had found out about the renegades. Calling the first cab, Léontine drove rapidly home, rushed to her strong-box, and got the supposed paste necklace out. She had said to Monsieur Bouchard that anybody could tell at a glance that it was an imitation, yet it so glowed and sparkled in its white radiance that for the first time she began to suspect it was real. If so, it only deepened the mystery, and she felt she must solve it then and there. Again ordering a cab, she sprang into it and ordered the cabman to drive her to one of the great jewelry shops in the Avenue de l'Opéra. On reaching it she ordered the carriage to wait, and going into the shop, asked to see the proprietor. He advanced, politely, and Léontine, taking the necklace from about her neck, where she wore it under her high bodice, said, with such calmness as she could muster:

"Will you kindly give me some idea of the value of this?"

The jeweler took it up, examined it for a moment, and said:

"About twenty thousand francs, I should say, Madame. The stones are remarkably well matched, better than in many costlier necklaces."

"Do you mean to say the stones are—are—"

"Well matched, Madame. In fact,

some of them came from this establishment. It was made by M. Leduc, a friend of mine, and I assisted him."

"Thank you," replied Léontine, forcing herself to be calm, reclasping the necklace round her throat and covering it up. She went out, got into the cab again, and hesitated before giving her order. She was in truth quite dazed and mystified. The man had touched his hat three times, when she said, with an air of quiet determination:

"To the St. Lazare station."

Yes, she would that very moment go and confess all to Victor. Her resolution seemed an inspiration. There was some mystery about the necklace, and it was only fair that Victor should know it. There should be no more concealments between them. She reached the station just in time to miss the eight o'clock train. It was still daylight, and she waited for the next—a very slow one. Halfway to Melun the engine broke down. It was nearly eleven o'clock before she found herself in front of the huge old barrack building in which de Meneval had his quarters.

The orderly who took the place of *concierge* at once recognized her, and politely escorted her to Captain de Meneval's door.

"I do not think Monsieur le Capitaine is in at present," he said; "but if Madame will wait, he will no doubt be here shortly." And he knocked loudly at the door.

It was opened by a soldier—de Meneval's servant—whom Léontine had never seen before. The man's unfamiliar face, and the unlooked-for sight that met her eyes as soon as she stepped over the threshold, made her turn as if to go out. In the middle of the room was spread a table, with preparations for an elaborate supper; and Léontine's quick eye discovered that ladies were expected, for to three huge bouquets were appended cards with names written on them. "For the Sprightly Aglaia," "For the Blue-eyed Olga," "For Louise of the Fairy Foot."

Léontine, slightly embarrassed, said to the soldier:

"I see I have made a mistake. I am Madame de Meneval, and I supposed these to be Captain de Meneval's quarters, but evidently they are not!"

"They are, Madame," replied the man, very civilly.

"But I say they are *not!*!" replied Léontine, somewhat tartly. "Captain de Meneval *never* entertains ladies at supper. He leads a most retired life at Melun, while here are preparations made for a gay party."

"Pardon, Madame; but Monsieur le Capitaine is giving the party to some young ladies from the Pigeon House."

Léontine's first impulse was to box the soldier's ears, but in sweeping another glance round the room she recognized her own picture over the mantel, together with a battered photograph of de Meneval's chum, Major Fallière, and other things to convince her that Captain de Meneval was really the host of the impending supper party. She retained self-possession enough to say to the man:

"If you have finished you may go." And he discreetly vanished.

Léontine, throwing her parasol on the sofa, began to march up and down the room in wrath and excitement.

"These are his quiet evenings! He doesn't know anything about the Pigeon House since he was married! I shouldn't have minded it if he had told me all about it, but to pretend to such economies, and at the same time be secretly indulging in these extravagances—oh, it is too much!"

Léontine had completely forgotten Putzki and Louise and the object of her sudden descent on her husband. While she was walking up and down, becoming every moment more angry and wrought up, the door opened, and in walked Major Fallière. Léontine recognized him at once from his picture—a soldierly looking man, slightly bald, immaculately well dressed, and bearing in his air the reason for his sobriquet, the Pink of Military Propriety. But his eye was

not unkind; on the contrary, he was distinctly in the class of men designated by women as dear old things; and as such Léontine felt an instant confidence in him.

The correct Major was not so correct, however, that he hesitated to march up to Léontine, and chucking her playfully under the chin, remarked:

"The Pigeons are out early tonight. Where are the rest of the Pouters?"

Léontine's face was a study. A flash of rage from her bright eyes was succeeded by a look of puzzled helplessness, and then a radiant smile of fun. This was really too good. He—old P. M. P.—had mistaken her, Léontine de Meneval, for one of the young ladies from the Pigeon House! Angry as she was, she could not forbear laughing, and she replied, with her sauciest air:

"Oh, they'll be here presently. I came early because I had a premonition that old P. M. P. would be here early, too. Always on time—one of the cardinal virtues of a soldier." And then Satan tempted her to tiptoe and actually chuck old P. M. P. under the chin!

The effect frightened her for a moment or two, because Major Fallière, perfectly astounded and highly offended, drew himself up stiffly and glared at her like an ogre. But she was so very pretty, her impertinence was accompanied with such a charming air of simplicity, that no man not an absolute ogre could withstand it. So, in spite of himself, old P. M. P.'s backbone relaxed, his eyes softened and he tugged at his mustache to disguise the smile that *would* persist in coming.

Léontine having once admitted Satan into her heart, he speedily took complete possession of the premises, and the next thing he inspired her to do was to examine the prim Major carefully from the top of his thinly thatched head down to the tips of his well-fitting shoes, and say to him:

"I have often heard of you, and I am so glad to meet you. You

know you are quite a handsome man, Major."

The Major grinned.

"For your age, that is."

The Major scowled.

"And I like you well enough to wish to make friends with you. But first I must tell you my name. It is Satanita."

"Satanita! Rather suggestive, eh?"

"I should say so. Little Satan; and I match my name."

"You are the sweetest, most innocent and captivating little devil I ever saw."

"Thank you. You should see me dance and hear me sing. The Pouters, as you call them, are not a patch on me."

"I can well believe it."

"Now," continued Léontine, seating herself with a confidential air beside Major Fallière, "what do you think of our host, Victor de Meneval?"

"One of the best fellows in the world."

"Devoted to his wife, eh?"

"Yes. I have never seen her, but I hear she is a charming creature, and Victor is truly attached to her."

"This looks like it, doesn't it?" cried Léontine, pointing to the supper table.

"I don't see that it doesn't look like it. I happen to know that de Meneval has had a good deal to trouble him lately. He got some money from an unexpected source some days ago, and I advised him to give a little supper—it's dull out here, you know—"

"You advised him to give a little supper! You—the Pink of Military Propriety!"

"Yes, why not?"

Léontine, having announced herself as Satanita, was at a loss to answer this question. But something in the Major's kind eyes, his way of standing up for Victor, his candid praise of herself, gave her a sudden impulse to tell him the whole story of what was weighing on her and perplexing her and had driven her out to Melun at that hour of the night. She knew all about him, what a generous, sympa-

thetic fellow he was, in spite of his primness and propriety—in short, that he was a dear old thing. So, with eyes flashing with mischief, and with smiles dimpling her fair face, Léontine said, demurely:

"I have another name besides Satanita. Can't you guess it?"

"No. I am not a clairvoyant."

"I am—" Léontine rose, with her whole face sparkling with impish delight—"I am Léontine, Madame de Meneval, wife of your friend, Victor de Meneval. Yonder is my picture. Here am I."

Poor P. M. P! He stared at her for a full minute, glared wildly about him, and then, jumping up, made a dash for the door, from which Léontine, laughing till the tears ran down her cheeks, dragged him back.

"What are you running away for?" she asked, forcing him to a seat beside her.

"Because—because—" the Major tore his hair, "oh, de Meneval will certainly shoot me when he hears that I chucked you under the chin!"

"But he won't hear it, unless you tell him. And I chucked you under the chin, remember."

Major Fallière, burying his head in his hands, groaned aloud, and then all at once the absurdity of the thing struck him, and he burst into a howl of laughter.

Léontine joined him. They laughed and laughed, and when they would get a little quiet Léontine would motion as if to chuck him under the chin again, and Fallière would go off into renewed spasms.

Presently, however, Léontine grew grave. The instant success of her impromptu personation had given her an idea. She wanted revenge—a sharp revenge—on de Meneval, and she saw a way to get it.

"Listen, and be quiet," she said to Fallière. "Victor deserves to be punished. I will tell you why. He has always represented to me that he led the quietest kind of a life here—nothing but attention to his military duties, and his evenings spent in the seclusion of his own room, with noth-

ing but ballistics and my picture for company."

Fallièrè could not refrain from a soft whistle.

"And he professed to be so glad that you were ordered to Melun, because you were so much more sedate than the other officers. He complained that they spend too much time at the Pigeon House, while he had entirely given up frequenting that fascinating place."

Fallièrè whistled a little louder.

"I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to take me to supper there the other night. Now, what do I find? That he has been throwing sand into my eyes all the time. Look!" Léontine waved her arms dramatically toward the table. "Oughtn't he to be punished?"

"Certainly he ought," replied Fallièrè, with the ready acquiescence of a bachelor who thinks that married men should be made to toe the line.

"Very well. You will help me?"

"You may count on me."

Léontine rose and looked around her. On the sideboard sat a couple of bottles of mineral water, and on the floor near by a wine cooler full of bottles of champagne. She cleverly transferred the labels from two of the champagne bottles to the apollinaris bottles and then put them in the wine cooler.

"I think I can drink at least a quart of apollinaris," she said.

"And I'll see that you get apollinaris every time," replied that crafty villain of a Fallièrè, laughing.

"And I'm Satanita, and I shall act Satanita until I have made Victor sorry enough he ever played me any tricks."

"Oh, no, you won't! At the first sign of distress on his part you will throw the whole business to the winds, fall on his neck and implore his forgiveness. I know women well."

"Of course you do—having never been married. But wait and see if I don't give him a bad quarter of an hour. And I reckon on your assistance."

"I will stand by you to the last."

They were interrupted at this point by a great sound of scuffling outside the door, mingled with shrieks of girlish laughter. The door flew open, revealing three remarkably pretty girls—Aglaia, Olga and Louise—dragging in an elderly gentleman by main force and his coat tails. The elderly gentleman was resisting mildly but with no great vigor, and it was plain he was not particularly averse to the roguish company in which he found himself. And the elderly gentleman was—Papa Bouchard!

One of these merry imps from the Pigeon House had possessed herself of his hat, which she had stuck on her curly head; another one had laid violent hands on his umbrella, while the third and sauciest of the lot, Aglaia, had robbed him of his spectacles, which she wore on her tiptilted nose. Papa Bouchard, puffing, protesting, frightened, but laughing in spite of himself, was saying:

"Young ladies, young ladies, I really cannot remain, as you insist, to supper. I do not even know the name of the host on this occasion. I am quite unused to these orgies. I am out here this evening with my servant merely for the purpose of completing a business transaction."

A chorus of "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" saluted this speech, and Mademoiselle Aglaia, Papa Bouchard's chief tormenter, asked, solemnly:

"Is your business engagement with a lady or a gentleman?"

And when Papa Bouchard, in the innocence of his soul, replied, "It is with a lady," each one of the Pouters, as the young ladies of the Pigeon House were called, pretended to fall over in a dead faint.

Papa Bouchard, much alarmed, ran from one to the other, trying to revive them; but while he was rubbing the brow and slapping the hands of each in turn, Louise suddenly came to life, and running and locking the door, put the key into her pocket, so that Papa Bouchard had no means of escape except out of the third-story window or up the chimney.

And at that moment his eye fell on Léontine.

Pity Papa Bouchard! He really had no intention of attending so gay a party. He had spent the whole evening anxiously watching for Madame Vernet. She had not arrived, or at least had not seen fit to reveal herself, and while he was hovering about the entrance to the terrace garden looking for her, these three merry girls had come along, had swooped down on him without the least warning, and had carried him off bodily to de Meneval's supper. Papa Bouchard had not the slightest idea of where he was when he was plumped down in Captain de Meneval's room. But one look round him—the sight of Léontine—revealed his whole dreadful predicament to him. It was too much for poor Papa Bouchard!

His persecutors having permitted him to sit on a chair, he endeavored to recover himself, and fanning with his handkerchief in great agitation, he debated with himself what to do. Léontine, meanwhile, was laughing at him without a sign of recognition.

Papa Bouchard, presently finding his voice, said sternly to Léontine:

"May I ask what you are doing here in this company?"

To which Léontine, with pert gaiety, replied:

"And may I ask what *you* are doing here in this company?"

"I," said Papa Bouchard, with dignity, "am here by accident, and by the violence of these young women."

"Oh, what a fib!" cried Olga. "The old hunks begged us to let him come. We tried to shake him off, but we couldn't. Isn't that so, Aglaia and Louise?"

And Aglaia and Louise said it was so. Papa Bouchard, astounded at such duplicity, glared at them, but the only satisfaction he got was a fillip on the nose from Aglaia and a remark to the effect that he and the truth didn't live at the same address. Papa Bouchard indignantly turned his back on these traducers and again opened on Léontine.

"I am amazed—amazed at your

temerity. What shall I say to Captain de Meneval when I see him, as I shall to-morrow morning?"

"Anything you like," was Léontine's laughing answer.

"Léontine de Meneval," cried Papa Bouchard, much enraged, "do you know *me*, your guardian and trustee?"

"No, I don't," responded Léontine, nonchalantly. "I never saw you before."

At this, shouts of laughter came from the three young ladies, and they all urged Papa Bouchard to stop his wild career of prevarication and learn to tell the truth.

Papa Bouchard, quite beside himself, turned to Major Fallière.

"Sir," he said, solemnly, "you wear the uniform of an officer, and I presume you are a gentleman. Believe me, this lady—" indicating Léontine—"is the wife of a brother officer of yours, Captain de Meneval. The truest kindness you can do him or her is to persuade her to leave this scene of dissipation and return to Paris with me."

"O-o-o-oh!" shrieked the three impish girls in chorus. "What an outrageous proposition! And she says she never saw the man before!"

Papa Bouchard, still appealing to Major Fallière, continued, earnestly:

"Perhaps this misguided girl has not told you that she is Madame Victor de Meneval."

"She told me," quietly replied Major Fallière, "that she was simply Satanita, a singer and dancer."

Papa Bouchard dropped limply on the sofa and groaned in anguish of heart. But now was heard a jaunty step on the stair, which all recognized as de Meneval's. The mischievous Aglaia ran forward and unlocked the door, and in stepped de Meneval, smiling and debonair.

Now, this little festivity had been his sole recreation during the ten miserable days since he had got into the complication of the necklace; and the supper, which was for only five, was at the suggestion of the Pink of Military Propriety. So it was without

any compunctions that de Meneval walked into his quarters, expecting to find a small but jolly party. But he instantly recognized the two uninvited members, and stopping short on the carpet, his ruddy complexion turned a sickly green.

Papa Bouchard felt a sensation of triumph at Captain de Meneval's entrance. *He*, at least, would not dare to deride and defy him, as these wretched young women had done. But before Monsieur Bouchard could open his mouth, Aglaia burst forth, pointing to the old gentleman:

"Of all the impudent men I ever saw, this one excels! What do you think? As soon as he found we were coming here to supper, he hung on to us—declared there was nothing he liked so well as a gay little party, that he could drink more champagne in a given time than any man in Paris, and actually forced himself in here, although we tried to push him out. Didn't he, Olga and Louise?"

And Olga and Louise confirmed every word that Aglaia uttered.

Papa Bouchard, thoroughly exasperated, struck an attitude like that of Socrates in his favorite picture, "Socrates and His Pupils," and addressed Captain de Meneval.

"Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, "you of course do not and cannot believe a word that these young ladies say concerning my presence here to-night."

Victor, very much alarmed, and dreading to catch Léontine's eye, yet retained enough of his wits to see that he had Papa Bouchard at a disadvantage, and that the best thing to do was to assume the worst and decline to listen to any explanation.

"Monsieur Bouchard," he said, coldly, "you are asking a little too much of me when you wish me to believe your testimony against that of three ladies. I don't know how you came, but I am very glad to see you now that you are here, and hope you will remain to supper."

"But I came on business!" cried poor Papa Bouchard. "I had an ap-

pointment to finish up a transaction with a lady——"

And Aglaia and Louise and Olga again uttered a chorus of shrieks, and pretended to faint.

But de Meneval had troubles of his own to attend to then. He walked over to where Léontine sat, and assuming an air of forced jollity, such as a man puts on when he anticipates a wiggling from the wife of his bosom, said:

"Delighted you happened to arrive, my love—and what do you think of the Pouters?"

"I think they are very jolly girls," promptly replied Léontine; "but as I am another uninvited guest, I thought it best to tell Major Fallière and the others that I, too, am a singer and dancer—Satanita I called myself on the spur of the moment."

De Meneval turned from green to blue. "And you did not immediately inform them that you are my wife?" he hissed, in a savage whisper.

"No," coolly replied Léontine, "and when Papa Bouchard recognized me, I declared I had never seen him before. I am little Satanita—good name, isn't it?—for this evening."

De Meneval, enraged and disconcerted beyond words, felt helpless. Suppose he were to proclaim the truth? Léontine, as if answering the thought in his mind, whispered, with cruel glee:

"And if you say I am your wife I shall simply deny it. Satanita I am and Satanita I shall be, and I shall live up to the part—of that you may be sure."

De Meneval was in doubt whether to laugh or to shoot himself. And then there was a move toward the table. The girls were dragging Papa Bouchard forward, who, still very angry, was yet not insensible to their pretty and mischievous wiles. Léontine, running up to Major Fallière, demanded that he sit next her at table, while de Meneval found himself sitting opposite Léontine, and with indescribable feelings saw her drink champagne, as he supposed,

by the tumblerful. Fallière had cleverly got hold of the two bottles of apollinaris, and filled Léontine's glass with the greatest assiduity.

There was much noise and excitement, and as the supper progressed de Meneval grew almost frantic over the spectacle his dear little Léontine was making of herself. For she not only managed to drink innumerable glasses of apollinaris, but she sang; she even danced. She paraded up and down the room, singing, in her sweet, saucy voice, verses made up at the moment.

When her invention gave out, she rubbed the top of de Meneval's head with one of the champagne bottles, and added, laughing:

"Houp-la!"

That "Houp-la" almost drove de Meneval to distraction, but a roar of applause, in which all joined except her husband and Papa Bouchard, encouraged Léontine to continue. After a few moments' reflection she began singing again:

"This is the way in Champagne Land!
Oh, Champagne Land is dear to me,
But Champagne Land is queer to me.

There lobsters grow on trees,

There is a mine of cheese;

The oysters walk,

The cocktails talk,

And the *pâté de foie gras* builds his nest
In the hedge where the anchovy paste
grows best."

And she concluded with another "Houp-la!"

At this Papa Bouchard, who had been as much horrified as de Meneval, leaned over and whispered in agony to him:

"She has certainly lost her mind and appears quite crazy!"

This was too much for poor de Meneval. He had spent an hour of torture while Léontine, vastly to her own amusement, to Major Fallière's, and to that of the Pouters, had exhibited all the saucy graces of a Sata-nita, but he could stand no more. Therefore, rising from the table, he cried, with tears in his eyes:

"My friends, I beg of you to leave me. This lady who calls herself Sata-

nita is my wife. I have never seen her act in this manner before—I am sure she never so acted before. It is my duty as well as my privilege to shield her, and I wish to say that if any person, man or woman, ever mentions what her unfortunate conduct to-night has been, a life will be forfeited, for I swear to shoot any man who dares to breathe one word against her, and any woman who does it may reckon on my vengeance." And with big tears rolling down his cheeks, he held out his arms to his wife.

This was too much for Léontine. Just as Major Fallière had predicted, at the first sign of repentance on de Meneval's part she forgot all her resolutions to punish him, and falling into his arms, she exclaimed, in her natural voice:

"You dear, chivalrous old thing, I haven't touched champagne—it is nothing but apollinaris water, and I am your own true, devoted Léontine!"

De Meneval was so overcome that he could do nothing but pat her head and cry:

"Oh, what have you not made me suffer to-night!"

"At least," replied Léontine, laughing and looking toward Major Fallière, "you have not spent your usual dull evening at Melun," and de Meneval had the grace to blush, while old P. M. P. laughed back at the roguish Léontine.

Papa Bouchard, too, had suffered agonies at Léontine's behavior—agonies, however, which the attentions he experienced at the hands of the young ladies partly ameliorated, for they had not stopped pinching and tickling him for a single moment.

"Really," he said, "I have been very much agitated and distressed—I never saw such doings in the Rue Clarisse. I was very seriously concerned at my ward's behavior—very seriously concerned. But now," continued Papa Bouchard, "everything seems to be straightened out to everybody's satisfaction, and finding ourselves accidentally together, why not finish up our evening with a jollity which—er—did not—er—exist, so far

as I am concerned, in the beginning? So I say—houp-la!"

Alas! at that very moment the door opened softly behind him and in walked Madame Vernet! She was prettier, more demure and gentle than ever before. Her black costume, though highly coquettish, had a nun-like propriety about it. She advanced with downcast eyes, and said, timidly:

"I knocked and thought I heard someone say, 'Come in.' I do not know on whose hospitality I am trespassing, but I saw Monsieur Bouchard enter half an hour ago, and as I must see him on a matter of business, I venture to ask for a word with him here."

Monsieur Bouchard, at the sight of her, seemed about to collapse. Not so Captain de Meneval. He rose at once and said, with an ironical bow:

"Madame Vernet, you are trespassing on the hospitality of Captain de Meneval, the gentleman you adopted as a brother about ten days ago and handed over as a dangerous lunatic to Dr. Delcasse—who had a strait-jacket, a cold douche and a padded cell ready for him."

At this Madame Vernet assumed an attitude more shrinking, more timid than before, and falling on Monsieur Bouchard's shoulder, cried:

"Dear Paul, protect me from this dreadful person!"

Monsieur Bouchard was not at that moment able to protect anybody. He looked the picture of abject despair as he clutched the arms of his chair. He could only say, feebly:

"Go away! go away!"

"Is that the way you speak to your own Adèle!" cried Madame Vernet, burying her head on Monsieur Bouchard's reluctant bosom and bursting into tears. "Oh, what a change within one short week! Last week it was nothing but 'Dearest Adèle, when will you name the day?' And now it is 'Go away! go away!'" Madame Vernet's voice was lost in sobs, but she continued to rub her left ear vigorously into Monsieur Bouchard's shirt front.

"It is false!" wailed Monsieur Bouchard, trying to escape from Madame Vernet's left ear.

"Do you pretend to deny," sobbed that timid and trustful creature, "that only a week ago you gave me this?" She took from her pocket the paste necklace, and at the sight of it a shock like a galvanic battery ran down the backbones of de Meneval and Léontine. "And that when I found it to be paste you offered me two thousand francs, in humble apology for the attempt to deceive me?"

"It is false!" again cried Monsieur Bouchard, almost in tears.

"And that we were to meet here to-night in order to make exchange? Oh, dearest Paul, we have had lovers' quarrels before, but nothing like this!"

Monsieur Bouchard was too much overcome by Madame Vernet's affectionate attentions to do more than groan and try to push her away. But de Meneval, walking coolly up to her, quietly and very unexpectedly took the necklace out of her hand, saying:

"This is the property of my wife, and as such I take possession of it, and call on Monsieur Bouchard to make an explanation."

At this Madame Vernet uttered a despairing shriek, and throwing both arms round Monsieur Bouchard's neck, screamed:

"You must avenge this insult, Paul! And you must at least give me the two thousand francs!"

But Monsieur Bouchard was so perfectly delighted with the notion that de Meneval had the necklace and Pierre the two thousand francs, that his countenance changed as if by magic. He struggled to his feet, and after vainly trying to disengage himself from Madame Vernet's encircling arms, much to the amusement of the three young ladies and Major Fallière, cried:

"I am perfectly overjoyed to make an explanation—an explanation that will cause you, Léontine, and you, de Meneval, to forget all the unpleasant events of this evening. This necklace is paste—and the one Léon-

tine has is real. You may remember, de Meneval, you came to my apartment a week ago last Monday evening, bringing Léontine's real diamond necklace with you. You told me that when you bought it for her you also bought an imitation one for seventy-five francs, which you kept a secret from her."

De Meneval, during this speech, had lost his dashing and determined attitude.

"I believe I did something of the kind," he said, meekly.

"And that you had, still unknown to Léontine, put the paste one in place of the real one; and you threatened, if I did not advance money to pay a large bill you owed at the Pigeon House for things like this—" Monsieur Bouchard indicated the supper table and the guests with one wave of his arm—"you would take the necklace to the pawnbroker."

De Meneval turned to Léontine, and knowing what was coming, said, with a sickly smile:

"Dearest, will you forgive me?"

"Indeed I will!" replied Léontine, who knew more of what was coming than did de Meneval.

"Scarcely were you gone," continued Monsieur Bouchard, assuming his oracular manner, which sat rather awkwardly on him, as Madame Vernet persisted in nestling on his shoulder, "when in comes Léontine with the paste necklace, and for the same purpose—money or the pawnbroker. It at once occurred to me that she could not be trusted with any necklace on which she thought money could be raised—her debts were to tailors and dressmakers—so I gave her back her own necklace—she has it now—and told her it was paste, and she said it looked it. Then, just as I had got rid of her, in comes *this lady*—" Papa Bouchard made a desperate effort to shake off Madame Vernet, but that diffident person only held on to him the more affectionately—"picked up the necklace, clasped it round her neck and walked off with it, and I have spent the most miserable week of my life

trying to get it back. I had arranged to give her the two thousand francs that Pierre, my man, has in his pocket at this moment, when, owing to this lady's indelicate persistence in following me here, and in rashly exposing the necklace, she lost it, and I keep my two thousand francs. If I could find that rascal Pierre I could prove all I say."

And as if in answer to his name, the door was burst open, and in rushed Pierre, pale and breathless.

"Monsieur," he cried to Papa Bouchard, "all is discovered, and we are in the greatest danger. My wife Élise found out everything from the *concierge* in the Rue Bassano this evening. She went back to Mademoiselle Bouchard, and, if you please, both of them took the train for Melun to capture us—and just as I was coming to warn you I ran into them at the foot of the stairs. They had asked for Captain de Meneval's quarters, in order to get him to help them search for us. They are on the stairs now!"

Léontine and de Meneval, meaning to let Monsieur Bouchard bear the brunt of Mademoiselle Bouchard's wrath alone, immediately scuttled into seats against the wall, which they occupied with great dignity. Major Fallière, who had heard of Mademoiselle Bouchard, got as far away from the girls as he could, and they—Aglaia, Olga and Louise—with much discretion ranged themselves primly on a sofa at the farthest end of the room. But this left Papa Bouchard standing in the middle, with Madame Vernet embracing him tenderly. He, too, would have liked to flee, but he was literally frozen with terror, and unable to move or speak. And then the door came open, and in walked, or rather marched, Mademoiselle Céleste Bouchard and Élise.

Never in all his fifty-four years of life had Monsieur Bouchard seen his sister in such a state as she was at that moment. Her eyes sparkled, and her small figure was erect and commanding. Her emotions had made both her and Élise alto-

gether forgot the primness and propriety of their costumes, for which mistress and maid had been noted. Mademoiselle Bouchard's correct, elderly bonnet seemed to have caught the same inflection of demoralization as Monsieur Bouchard, Pierre and Pierrot, for it sat at a most improper and dissipated angle. Her mantle was awry, and she had on one white glove and one black one, and a fringe of white petticoat showed the agitation in which she had dressed.

Élise was in somewhat the same condition, and she clutched a flower pot and a gold-headed stick which had belonged to Bouchard *père*, under the impression they were a traveling bag and an umbrella.

The sight that met their eyes was Monsieur Bouchard apparently submitting with willingness to Madame Vernet's endearments, while the lady herself sobbed out:

"Oh, Paul, dearest, protect your own Adèle from that dreadful old woman!"

Now, this was too much for any woman to stand. Mademoiselle Bouchard, panting and trembling with wrath and horror, sank into a chair.

"Élise," she gasped, putting her hand before her eyes, "put up your umbrella between me and that disgraceful sight. I cannot look upon it."

Élise, equally agitated, made futile attempts to convert the stick into an umbrella, and then cried out:

"Oh, this is only a stick! Perhaps I put the umbrella in the traveling bag." But failing to find an umbrella in the flower pot, she collapsed into a chair next her mistress, crying out: "When you, Mademoiselle, have finished with Monsieur Bouchard I'll dispose of Pierre. Oh, the rascal!"

Pierre, like his master, was dumb before the accuser. Not so Madame Vernet. She continued to appeal to Monsieur Bouchard:

"Oh, darling Paul, I am *so* frightened! Why don't you send her away?"

As for poor Monsieur Bouchard, he was simply a pitiable sight, and the

de Menevals, the Major and the three girls were heartless enough to go into convulsions of silent mirth at his predicament. They, too, had nothing to say in Mademoiselle Bouchard's indignant presence. But that lady was determined to be answered.

"Paul," she said, in the tone of an inquisitor, "stop those shocking demonstrations toward that person and explain your conduct to me."

"My dear Céleste," replied Papa Bouchard, in a faint voice and almost weeping, "if you could induce this lady to stop *her* demonstrations I should be the happiest man on earth. And there's no explanation to give. I'm the helpless victim of a designing woman."

At which Madame Vernet screamed and said, trying to kiss him:

"But I will forgive you, my own Paul. I know you don't mean what you say."

Apparently Madame Vernet was mistress of the situation, but Major Fallière, the cool, quiet Fallière, came to the rescue. Going up quietly to Madame Vernet, he deliberately raised her face so he could look her squarely in the eye.

"Madame Vernet," he said, "you seem to have lost sight of that little incident of representing my friend, Captain de Meneval, as your brother and a dangerous lunatic, and the trick you played on Dr. Delcasse. Now, I happen to know that Dr. Delcasse is determined to punish you, if he can find you, and unless you immediately leave these quarters and leave Melun I shall inform Dr. Delcasse of your whereabouts, and you will have a visit from the police."

Madame Vernet, seeing she had met her match, disengaged herself from Monsieur Bouchard, to that gentleman's great joy. Assuming an attitude and air of great innocence, she said:

"I don't really understand what you mean, or even who you are. But being naturally a very diffident and retiring person, I cannot stand the least unfavorable criticism, and I

shall certainly leave this censorious and unsympathetic company."

Major Fallière ceremoniously offered her his arm, escorted her to the door, and opened it. Madame Vernet paused on the threshold.

"I go," she said, "to seek refuge and protection with my aunt and uncle in Mézières."

And the Major shut the door after her.

Mademoiselle Bouchard then rose majestically and advanced to Monsieur Bouchard.

"And *you*, Paul," she said, "will seek refuge and protection in the house of your sister in the Rue Clarisse, where you spent thirty happy and peaceful years. You will thus resume the orderly and quiet life interrupted by your unfortunate excursion into the Rue Bassano. You will return to early hours and wholesome meals. You will have boiled mutton and rice, with a small glass of claret, for your dinner, and ten o'clock will be your hour for retiring. An occasional visit to a picture gallery or a museum will supply you with amusements far more intellectual than the orgies you have been indulging in at the Pigeon House."

Monsieur Bouchard, the image of despair, looked round him. Captain de Meneval and Léontine were in fits of laughter. The three girls, huddled together on the sofa, were tittering; the grim Major was smiling broadly. Even a worm will turn, and so did Monsieur Bouchard.

"I am sorry, my dear Céleste," he said, in a voice he vainly endeavored to make cool and debonair, "but what you suggest is impossible. I have taken my apartment for a year. And I find that boiled mutton and rice for dinner do not suit my constitution. I—I—I—shall re—remain in the Rue Bassano."

A round of applause from Major Follière, Léontine and Victor, in which the three young ladies joined, much to Monsieur Bouchard's annoyance, greeted this. Nevertheless, it stiffened his backbone.

"Do you mean to say that you do

not intend to return to the Rue Clarisse?" asked Mademoiselle Bouchard, in much agitation.

"Y—yes," replied Monsieur Bouchard, trying to assume a swash-buckler air. "You see, I don't think the air of the Rue Clarisse agrees with me very well. I often had twinges of rheumatism there. Now, since I have been in the Rue Bassano my joints feel about twenty-five years younger. In fact, I myself feel considerably younger—an increased vitality, so to speak. I am sorry to disoblige you, my dear Céleste, but for the sake of my health and other reasons I shall remain in my present quarters."

Mademoiselle Bouchard, defeated, was speechless. Not so Élise. Walking up to Pierre, she seized him and bawled:

"No excuses about your health shall keep *you* from the Rue Clarisse. I promise you that you shall have a very different time there from your life in the Rue Bassano, turning night into day, running out here to the Pigeon House all the time and making a show and a scandal of yourself."

"No, Élise," firmly replied Pierre, who had much more real courage than his master, "I promised Mademoiselle Bouchard that I never would desert Monsieur Bouchard. If he remains in the midst of the dangers of the Rue Bassano he needs my protecting services more than ever. Although but a servant, I have a sense of honor. I cannot break my word."

"Oh, you old hypocrite—" began Élise.

"Hypocrite you may call me," answered Pierre, folding his arms and turning up the whites of his eyes, "but liar and falsifier you cannot. Mademoiselle—" to Mademoiselle Bouchard—"I shall keep my word to you. As long as Monsieur Bouchard remains in the Rue Bassano I stay with him. He shall not face alone the dangers of that gay locale—those music halls, those theatres, those merry cafés, where all sorts of delicious, indigestible things are sold.

His faithful Pierre shall be with him."

Mademoiselle Bouchard realized she was beaten. So did Élise. They rose slowly. De Meneval ran into the next room, and bringing out a cage that held the redoubtable Pierrot, put it into Mademoiselle Bouchard's hand.

"There, dear Aunt Céleste," he cried, "is your consoler. I offered to buy him from the proprietor of the Pigeon House, but the man said he would give me the bird for nothing—in fact, he would pay to get rid of him. He was driving the customers of the Pigeon House away by his language."

"At least," said Mademoiselle Bouchard, solemnly, "if men are renegades, there is something of the same sex that is faithful and grateful. No doubt this poor bird is happy at escaping from the dissipated atmosphere of the Pigeon House to the sweet seclusion of the Rue Clarisse."

But, horror of horrors! The instant the wicked Pierrot found himself going in the direction of the door, on his way to the Rue Clarisse, he broke out into the most outrageous denunciations of the two ladies. Shrieks, demoniac laughter, yells, oaths and slang of the worst description poured from him; he screamed with rage, bit furiously at both Mademoiselle Bouchard and Élise, and forcing the cage door open, with almost human intelligence flew out and perched on Monsieur Bouchard's shoulder, from which he continued his volley of abuse, winding up with a shout of:

"Go to the devil, you old mummies!"

But the two mummies were already

fleeing. Of course, no such bird as Pierrot had become could be tolerated in the Rue Clarisse, and Élise cried, while she and Mademoiselle Bouchard ran down the stairs:

"The only safe thing to do, Mademoiselle, is to keep everything masculine out of our apartment. They are all alike—men and parrots—everything that is masculine is abominable and not to be trusted. They live to deceive us poor women, and are never so happy as when they are lying to us. So let them go—Monsieur, Pierre and Pierrot—the wretches, and trust to retributive justice to overtake them!"

But neither Monsieur Bouchard nor Pierre seemed to fear the blindfolded lady with the sword. They were at that moment capering with glee, and Papa Bouchard was shouting:

"I invite you all to the Pigeon House to supper once a week with me! It is the jolliest place I know! And the next jolliest place shall be in the Rue Bassano! Léontine, you shall have all your income to spend, and if you get into straits for a thousand francs or two, let Papa Bouchard know. Victor, when there's a little supper party on hand don't forget Papa Bouchard. Pierre, we are free—free!—young, free and gay as the larks! Pierre, do you hear, my boy?—we're free! We're not going back to live in the Rue Clarisse, but we shall lead a pleasant life, like the gay dogs we are, and sit up all hours and eat and drink of the best! We are free!"

"Yes—free!" echoed Pierre, capering in his delight, while Pierrot shrieked, as if inspired:

"Free! free! Gay dogs we are! Free!"



PLEASANT DREAMS

MAY—Have you ever dreamed that you were married?

GRACE—Have I! Why, I was divorced three times in my dreams last night,

DIGHTON IS ENGAGED!

By Gelett Burgess

DIGHTON is engaged! Think of it and tremble!
Two-and-twenty ladies who have known him must dissemble;
Two-and-twenty ladies in a panic must repeat:
"Dighton is a gentleman; will Dighton be discreet?"
All the merry maidens who have known him at his best
Wonder what the girl is like, and if he has confessed.
Dighton the philanderer, will he prove a slanderer?
A man gets confidential ere the honeymoon has fled.
Dighton was a rover then, Dighton lived in clover then;
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Corinna!
Watch and see his fiancée smile on you at dinner!
Watch and hear his fiancée whisper, "*That's the one?*"
Try and raise a blush for what you said was "only fun."
Long have you been wedded; have you then forgot?
If you have I'll venture that a certain man has not!
Dighton had a way with him; did you ever play with him?
Now that dream is over, and the episode is dead.
Dighton never harried you after Charlie married you;
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Bettina!
Did you ever love him when the sport was somewhat keener?
Did you ever kiss him as you sat upon the stairs?
Did you ever tell him of your former love affairs?
Think of it uneasily and wonder if his wife
Soon will know the amatory secrets of your life!
Dighton was impressible, you were quite accessible;
The bachelor who marries late is apt to lose his head;
Dighton wouldn't hurt you; does it disconcert you?
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Miss Alice!
When he comes no longer will you bear the lady malice?
Now he comes to dinner, and he smokes cigars with Clint,
But he never makes a blunder and he never drops a hint;
He's a universal uncle, with a welcome everywhere—
He adopts his sweetheart's children, and he lets 'em pull his hair.
Dighton has a memory bright and sharp as emery,
He *could* tell them fairy stories that would make you rather red!
Dighton can be trusted, though; Dighton's readjusted, though!
Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!

THE SMART SET

Dighton is engaged! Think of it, Myrtilla!
 Dighton has been known to be a dashing lady-killer!
 Dighton has been known to flirt with Kitty, Lou and Nell,
 These and many others, if the man would only tell!
 Every girl who loves a man tells him all she knows;
 When a man's a Benedick all discretion goes!

Dighton's wife will chatter so! Does it really matter so?
 Everybody's bound to know what everybody's said!

Dighton thinks his mystery contravenes all history!
 Dighton is a gentleman, but Dighton is to wed!



HEART TO HEART ADVICE

SHE—I would leave my happy home for you.
HE—That's all very good, my precious; but don't burn the bridges behind you.



LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE

BOBBY—Father, is it correct to say that a storm is brewing?

COLONEL BLOOD—No, my son; it never rains anything but water



BEWARE OF VIDDERS

YOU may love a simple little maid,
 And in time may marry her;
 But to wed a widow, gay or staid
 Is a thing that can't occur.

For the widow is of sterner stuff,
 And you'll find it pretty true
 You can wed a maid all right enough,
 But a widow marries you!



NOT GUILTY

BRONSON—I understand you told someone I was a dog.

HOBSON—It wasn't I. You are barking up the wrong tree, old fellow.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

By Elizabeth Duer

IF a man cannot get more out of the tie of brotherhood than a mere sense of kinship there is something wrong either with himself or the other fellow. At any rate, I found my brother Phil satisfied my warmest affections—that is, till quite lately—and gave me a motive for circumspect behavior which would have tended toward priggishness if I had not been just the man I am.

When we were boys, as long as my parents lived I felt irresponsible in regard to Philip, and he often wore on my nerves—in fact, I cuffed him like thunder—for he was three years younger than I, and had no business to set himself up as my equal. For example, if I chose to be a wild Indian, with the handle of the housemaid's feather duster thrust down my back and the plumes nodding fiercely over my scalp, it was pretty disgusting to have Phil go whining to the parlormaid for a similar war-bonnet, with the result that mine was removed from me with abuse; or if I chose to visit the cherry trees and *look* at the fruit till my waistband grew tight, it was hard lines that Phil should first follow my example and then have a bilious attack, which gave ocular proof that the seduction of fruit to man does not lie wholly in apples. Alas! other fruits in their turn are desired to make one wise.

When our parents died our guardian and relations discovered I was the only person who could manage Phil, and so, gradually, his education was left in my control, and—there is no use in blinking the truth—I grew dotingly fond of him.

I meant him to follow my lead—that is, to go to one of our great New England schools, then to Harvard, later to study law in New York—I am now thirty, and making from eight to ten thousand a year—but he developed a taste for brass buttons, and nothing would serve him but West Point. The truth is, Phil and I had prospects—a rich uncle, who had already turned seventy-five, and meant to leave his moneybags to us—so it did not seriously matter in what special line the boy received his discipline. So I got him his appointment through our cousin, Senator Bagge, and the young rascal passed rattling good examinations, and never got into more scrapes than he could pull himself out of, but he caught the cadet attitude toward girls. Everybody knows what that is—a dancing-master gallantry at the first interview, more than suggested love-making at the second, a kiss and a declaration at the third. However, he graduated without any serious entanglement just at the breaking out of the Spanish War. He got an appointment on General Sabre's staff, was ordered to Manila, and I saw him off with a heavy heart, but with no fears for his safety except those incident to bullets and a hot climate. A delay in San Francisco, however, gave time for idleness and some arch mischief, which makes me fancy that his Majesty of Horns and Hoofs is not a stranger to the Pacific slope. I had a letter:

DEAR MONTY:

I was married yesterday to the loveliest girl in the world. She has no relations and was studying nursing at the

San Francisco Hospital, where I was laid up for a week with a sprained ankle.

We are sailing to-morrow, and old Sabre—bad luck to his leather wallet of a heart!—says Ada cannot follow me, that Manila is no place for ladies, and any of his staff disregarding his wishes in this respect will find themselves speedily transferred, etc.

My poor girl is broken-hearted. Be a brother to her, as you have always been to me, dear Mont, and if I die let her look to you for protection.

Affectionately yours,
PHILIP MURRAY.

Her name is Ada. She was a hospital nurse, and is now Mrs. Philip Murray. A nice lot of information to help one form some idea of a newly acquired sister-in-law! If I had had Phil in New York I could have beaten him from the Battery to the Bronx with his own sword. The way young people bind burdens for the shoulders of their relatives is appalling; and then they expect the relatives to be touched by a few sentimental allusions to past kindnesses.

A hospital nurse! Somehow it excited my old-fashioned prejudices. Theoretically, I respected women who could work for their living, but in reality I despised them cordially and looked on them with suspicion.

It took me three months to forgive Phil, but I did at last, and I wrote to him regularly and sent him boxes of books and good things to eat, but I drew the line at Mrs. Phil. I said I was not to be appealed to except in case of extreme necessity. I even suggested—*via* Manila—that she would do well to return to the training school.

By the following Spring I had got quite accustomed to the idea of Phil's being away, and I seldom thought of the anxiety that lurked in San Francisco. In fact, I had enjoyed my Winter uncommonly, and had allowed myself a good deal of dissipation in the way of dinners and entertainments, because I found it the easiest way to obtain speech with Miss Honora Standard, a young lady of such superior mind that she would have attracted me if she had been as

plain as—well, most superior women, instead of the beauty everyone raved about. My interest in Miss Standard had much to do with my indifference to the worries provided by Phil, and I was ill prepared for the shock that awaited me one April morning when I got to my office. A telegram lay on my desk.

To MONTGOMERY MURRAY:

Mrs. Philip Murray died here to-day after giving birth to a son.

W. J. BROWN, M. D.,
San Francisco Hospital.

The Summer resident of New York has undoubtedly often seen some great epic done in histrionic fireworks by Mr. Paine, and will recall the usual finale when the mountains and the waters are turned into molten streams and the galleys and the warships burst into a hell of explosion, and the beating hearts of the audience are quieted only when the familiar countenance of their President literally beams on them from a concerted piece. Just so, across the miserable excitement and chaos of my mind, stood out the helpful, noble features of my friend Dr. Dearborn.

I threw business to the winds—that is, to my partners—and calling a hansom I was rapidly driven to my friend's house in Forty-first street. He is a great authority on babies, and on being ushered into his waiting-room I found it packed with mothers and nurses, each of the latter hushing a bundle of white fluff, while the atmosphere was laden with a mixture of scent, warm flannel and sourness. I backed out, and finding the servant in the hall, I pressed a bill into her hand and begged her to procure me an immediate interview with the great man, on the ground of intimacy and pressure of time.

Alas! the autocrat's advice coincided with the warnings of my conscience.

"I don't see any other course, old fellow. You will have to assume charge until Phil gets home, and that can't be for months. With a good nurse it won't be such a nuisance as you think."

"But the absurdity of the situation!" I urged. "It is enough to ruin my reputation!"

"Nonsense!" said Dearborn. "Do your duty and let your reputation take care of itself."

For the first time in my life I distrusted Dearborn's single-mindedness. I believe he saw me, in his mind's eye, waiting with a nurse and a white bundle in that damned reception-room, and was gloating over all the shekels that would jingle out of my pockets into his.

"Then you advise me to telegraph the hospital authorities to send the child on?" I said, dejectedly.

"I advise you to *go* for it," he answered, sternly.

Life took on a dismal coloring.

"I look just the figure, don't I, to dandle a week-old child from California to New York! You'll have to guess again, Dearborn."

My fine scorn was absolutely thrown away.

"You had better start as soon as you can," he said. "There will be money matters to settle, and in regard to the child, get a good, healthy wet-nurse and bring it East."

"Oh!" I said, as I grasped the idea, "I never thought of that. But when I get it here, you would hardly advise its living in my rooms at the University Club, would you?"

He hated to be made fun of, and answered, pettishly:

"You will have to take a cottage for the Summer, near town, in some healthful locality."

I wondered whether he had a cottage up his sleeve.

"Do you know Hilltop, in New Jersey?" he continued. "Just the place for you. I think I could manage to look up a house for you there while you are away. The price? Oh, in the neighborhood of a thousand, but fully furnished, even to a horse and a cow."

He seemed rather intimate with this cottage. The baby might find the cow available, and I should value the horse as a means of getting away from the place, but they hardly fulfilled my idea of furniture.

"Good-bye," I said, dismally; "I place myself in your hands."

"Stay a moment, Murray," he called after me. "Take this book, 'Advice to Young Mothers,' it tells you nearly everything you ought to know, and if you look it over carefully you can really get the upper hand of your nurse. She may even suppose you a physician and be afraid to flout your opinion. Above all things, learn to be firm; women of that class are apt to take advantage of any uncertainty on the part of their employers."

The door closed behind me. There stood my hansom waiting, not for me alone, but for a pack of worries I had to bundle in with me, and which oppressed me like an asthma.

II

DR. BROWN received me at the San Francisco Hospital with that professional warmth which is so consoling. He rapidly ran over the events of Mrs. Murray's death. She had lived a few hours after the birth of the child, long enough to furnish my name and address and to have the child christened, for she was a Catholic and had summoned her priest.

"What is its name?" I asked.

"Yours, I believe, sir," the doctor responded. "Would you like to see the infant? By the way, you spoke of taking it East at once. I should advise a trained nurse accompanying you, even if you secure a wet-nurse."

I shook my head.

"They have proved inimical to my family," I said, with feeling. "If you can help me to the safer kind you spoke of I shall feel under great obligations."

"And you start when?" he asked.

"The sooner the better," I responded.

My nephew was presented by a nurse in picturesque uniform. He was very red in complexion and his head was partially covered by patches of a blackish down that grew to a point on his forehead. He opened a

slit of his left eye and then sneezed; evidently I affected him unpleasantly. Presently he yawned. I declare, it was absolutely human!

I stroked him with the handle of my umbrella. I knew it was customary to fondle children, and I did not wish to seem indifferent.

Dr. Brown most kindly engaged to find me a suitable nurse, and Miss Smith, the head of the training school, a charming middle-aged lady, undertook to look after Montgomery's wardrobe. The next day a nurse had been chosen—a large, sandy-haired Irish-woman with the expression of a ruminating red-and-white cow.

A few days' delay was necessary to let the nurse place her own baby among friends, and it also appeared that the deficiencies of Montgomery's layette were more radical than had been supposed. He had no cloak and cap. I offered Miss Smith a roll of bills to make the necessary purchases.

"I suppose for so long a journey it is hardly wise to get a white cloak," she said.

"Excuse me one moment," I answered, and running into the hall I hastily consulted my book. The fourth chapter treated of the clothing of infants. "For hard service a cloak and cap of some inoffensive color will be found more serviceable than white." The lady's opinion was confirmed. I should make my first attempt to combine knowledge and firmness.

I returned to the room blowing my nose, which I felt was an intimation that I had left the room to seek my handkerchief.

"White is too perishable," I said, firmly. "I should like a good serviceable color."

"Faint gray would be pretty," she suggested.

"I prefer green," I answered, in an absolute way.

"Green!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"Of not too faint a shade," I said, taking up my hat.

"But, Mr. Murray, such a thing is unusual; it cannot be bought ready made; it is unprecedented."

"Spare no expense," I said, airily, bowing myself out of the room.

A cable from Phil reached me the following day with directions about his wife's grave, and begging me to befriend his baby. I did feel truly sorry for my brother and my heart warmed to his little son. I resolved to do my duty honestly by that child.

Montgomery and his nurse joined me at my hotel the day before we started on our journey East.

I gave a quiet half-hour to "Advice to Young Mothers" before they came, and made myself entirely familiar with the ignorant mistakes to be anticipated in nurses. When I showed Mrs. Houlahan to her temporary nursery I improved the occasion to let her see I was not a person likely to be imposed on.

"I require great vigilance on your part, Mrs. Houlahan," I said, "but never act on your own responsibility, if you can possibly appeal to me. Do not keep the child sitting up too long at a time," I added, with dignity; "it often produces a curvature of the spine; and do not yield to his efforts to stand on his feet till he gets a little older. I should also like you to inculcate habits of great personal neatness by both precept and example."

The fool of a woman stared at me as if she had not half taken in my orders. I hope intelligence does not come to children with their nourishment, or Montgomery will have a poor show.

But few incidents marked our trip East. I made out a list of articles, from the pages of the "Advice," proper for Houlahan's diet, and gave it to the dining-room porter who served me, accompanying it with half of a five-dollar bill that I had cut in two, and promising the other half if no forbidden dainty was allowed her before we reached New York. It worked to a charm. She seemed to find the food to her taste, and Montgomery showed a corresponding appreciation.

Just beyond Omaha, however, the first *contretemps* occurred. In the middle of the night Montgomery be-

gan to cry. His cries quickly developed into screams. Every berth in the car was astir, heads protruded from curtains, and all the married women hastily appeared, in improvised toilettes, to give advice. The unsympathetic male element made unfeeling remarks about its being just their luck to light on a nursery car, and coarse speeches of that nature.

Houlahan sat on the edge of her berth attired in a brown petticoat and red-and-black flannel jacket with emancipated buttons. She flopped Montgomery over on his stomach, and making a pivot of her toes, tried to assuage his agonies by swinging him to and fro on her knees.

I got the porter to turn up the light while I sought "Advice." "If the upper part of the face is distorted," it said, "the pain is most probably in the head, earache being a common affection with young children; if the middle features—by which is meant the nose and upper lip—look for chest trouble; should the mouth and chin be convulsed, the discomfort is probably in the digestive organs." I had gleaned this much information when a wilder paroxysm of crying made me hasten to the baby.

"Turn Montgomery over," I ordered.

You will hardly believe me, but *every sign* was present at once, and I had not had time to study the remedies.

"Undress him," I said, and then hurried back to the light. As I turned the pages my eye caught this sentence: "Twitching of the eyeballs accompanied by squinting heralds the visit of convulsions." I rushed back to look at him once more. He stopped crying and, looking me full in the face, rolled up his eyes and winked.

"Convulsions, by Jupiter!" I exclaimed.

"Get hot water!" screamed all the women.

The porter started for the dining-car.

"Call to him to bring some mustard," said a capable looking young

woman, who I felt was to be my salvation.

We all stood grouped round Montgomery, whose undressing was now accomplished and whose cries were subsiding into deep sighs.

"Let me look at his clothes," said the capable lady, and squeezing them gently in her fingers, she drew out a long needle and thread from the waist of his slip.

III

ON our arrival in New York I determined to go for a few days to the Savoy while the cottage at Hilltop was made ready for our reception. It was still only April and the country seemed cheerless.

Driving up to the hotel I was at cross purposes with myself whether to satisfy the longing I felt to gaze once more on the sights of my beloved New York, or to sink back in the embrace of the closed railroad cab I had hired to avoid recognition on the part of any acquaintances I might chance to pass.

As we drew up in front of the Savoy I jumped out impetuously, and received Montgomery from Houlahan while that person collected the impedimenta incident to prolonged traveling with an infant. A week's training had not been thrown away on a person of my intelligence. I held Montgomery on one arm with easy grace, and his green cloak fell in ample folds below my knees.

"Good-morning, Mr. Murray," said Miss Standard's voice, in my ear.

I nearly dropped my nephew, while my complexion rivaled his in color. My thoughts fairly spun.

"Damnation!"—"Shall I explain?"—"Will it make the situation less absurd if I do?"—"Yes, but I owe it to her."—"I *will!*!" and making this grand resolve I turned round, only to find Miss Standard half a block away, walking with Reginald Flight.

At the Savoy I arranged with the management to let a housemaid sit with Montgomery while Houlahan

went to her meals, and I found myself comparatively free.

I avoided my club, because men are so given to asking direct questions as to where you have been and why you went, but feeling in need of amusement I bought a seat at the theatre, and expected some diversion. I got it! Mrs. Standard and a large party filed in, the elder lady occupying the seat farthest from the aisle and next to mine.

She turned an amused, friendly face to me.

"My daughter saw you playing Good Samaritan to an Irishwoman and her baby this morning. Were they millionaires in disguise stopping at the Savoy?"

I should gladly have given my confidence to Honora, but I resented being pumped by her mother.

"Does stopping at the Savoy imply millions?" I asked, seizing the clause of her sentence which seemed safest.

"More or less," she replied. "But perhaps I am indiscreet in my questions."

"My dear lady," I returned, "indiscretion does not lie so much in questions as in answers."

"In that case your prudence is unassailable," she said, with some vexation.

"I should be glad to consider it so," I remarked.

Mrs. Standard turned a cold shoulder.

After the fall of the curtain she determined, apparently, to give me another chance.

"Where have you been hiding, Mr. Murray? It is a long time since we have met."

"Hiding is not a pretty word, Mrs. Standard. A person hides only when concealment is necessary."

"Then you have nothing to conceal?" she said, casting a meaning glance at me.

"Nothing but the warmth of my affections and my good deeds," I replied.

"Some people might caution you to suppress your affections until your deeds could bear open discussion."

"That would imply a flattering interest in both my affections and my conduct," I said, impertinently.

"Which I am sure no one feels!" she snapped, and again presented an elderly back.

In the foyer, coming out of the theatre, I found myself close to Honora.

"May I find you at home to-morrow at five?" I asked, anxiously.

"Did mamma say you might come?" she responded, quickly, and with a tone of glad relief.

"I didn't ask her," I returned. "Why, when I've been received at your house all the Winter, should I suddenly have to ask your mother's permission?"

She grew very red.

"Only that we're sailing for England on Saturday and our time is much occupied," and she smiled disingenuously.

"Then it's a long good-bye?" I said, with affected indifference.

"I'm afraid so," she acquiesced, without offering her hand.

Oh, well! Save me from my friends! Here was a girl who had let me make semi-love to her for two months, and who certainly met my advances half-way, ready to dismiss me without a word of explanation, just because my conduct was susceptible of misconstruction. I did not so much blame Mrs. Standard, for she at least had offered me the chance to set myself right with her, but Honora had refused me a hearing. My bad temper whispered that if they had known about Uncle Dangerfield's millions they would have seen nothing but philanthropy in my conduct. At all events, I weighed Honora in my balance and found her wanting. I was really wounded, but I fancy it was more in my self-esteem than in my deeper affections. In the snapping of romantic ties the suffering rarely outlasts the readjustment of one's ideas.

After this experience Hilltop seemed an agreeable retreat. All my dreams lately had set to a home of my own, with Honora as its head; now I

was to have the home, but with Montgomery as the ruling presence.

By the end of the week, just when Honora was sailing out of my life, and I was busy establishing my household, an event occurred which completely changed the face of my existence. Uncle Dangerfield died, leaving his hoards to Philip and me. He had lived almost squalidly in Paris many years, and the amount of his fortune was hardly suspected, even by those who knew him best. As I shrank from public comment on my affairs, I took every precaution to keep an account of my uncle's will out of the newspapers, and as its wording gave no clue to the amount he left, it excited little attention. Later, the inheritance tax would fix the valuation, but for a little while I could still feel that my friends prized me for myself alone. The lawyers urged the necessity of Phil's return, and I cabled him to that effect. Boylike, he chose to come back by the longest route—India, the Suez Canal and, of course, Paris—so we could not hope to see him before August at the earliest. For the present I intended making no changes in my habits of living, beyond those already made necessary by my obligations to the baby.

I gave up several days to getting the cottage in running order. I added a pair of horses to the noble stud that had figured so prominently in Dearborn's inventory, sent down a T-cart for myself and a perambulator for Montgomery, and as a finishing touch introduced a long-distance telephone.

My servants appeared capable—all but Houlahan—and they took the deepest interest in the child.

When once the household settled down I had comparative peace. Montgomery grew apace. His complexion became the regulation lily-and-rose tint, and his eyes quite distinct. His backbone showed a disposition to stiffen, and his grimaces did not always end in a howl.

As I said, matters were going so smoothly that I felt almost happy; indeed, I made a plan to run on to New-

port for a few days—but how vain the purposes of parents, even transient ones!

An hour before my train started, my cook—a most intelligent person—telephoned that Montgomery had disappeared! It seemed that his nurse had taken him out in the morning, and up to the time of the cook's telephoning—4 P.M.—had never reappeared.

I rushed to the ferry and took the first train to Hilltop. Why had I been such an ass as to suppose my masculine wits equal to contending with these unexpected vagaries on the part of Houlahan!

My servants could throw some light on the subject, which encouraged me to dismiss the idea that he had been kidnapped. A child belonging to the gardener of the place next to mine had just died of malignant measles, and Mrs. Houlahan had strolled, with the baby, down to the house to see the funeral start. It was suggested that she might have been invited to drive with the mourners to the cemetery, and the distance being great, it would take all day to go and come. This, however, was only a surmise on their part.

I went to work on that clue, and found that some workmen on the next place had seen a woman, with a baby in a green cloak, get into one of the carriages. I was also able to identify Montgomery's perambulator, standing under a tree near the porch of the gardener's house. I started to wheel it home, but recalling the contagion to which it had been exposed, I decided to leave it as a gift to the gardener. For two hours I walked up and down my piazza, too nervous to enjoy even the evening papers, and finally, at seven o'clock, a dusty country hack drawn by two exhausted horses drew up to the gate, and Houlahan heavily descended. Montgomery was asleep, and apparently in excellent health. Houlahan was somewhat unsteady in her gait, and there was that glassy look in her eye which grief sometimes imparts to funeral parties. She lurched against the gate-

post, and I called sharply to her to be careful.

"You nearly knocked the child's head," I said.

"Lave the babe to me," she answered, loftily. "Sure, you have me heart scalded with the rules of you."

"You forget yourself," I said.

"Forgit mesilf!" she repeated. "Why don't you projuce your book for the manes to make me remimber!"

"You have been drinking," I said, sternly.

She sank into a large piazza chair and burst into tears and reproaches. Her character was taken away entirely, and it was hard the blessed lamb could not go for a drive without getting his Nanna into trouble, so it was, but she'd be leaving him anyhow, as she was going to California in the morning. This last refrain took on a musical cadence and ran through mutterings that lasted for ten minutes.

I got Dearborn on the telephone and explained the case. I demanded an intelligent trained nurse—"as near a lady as possible," I added, in my folly—"and some bottled food for Montgomery."

Dearborn promised aid in two hours. Presently he rang me up.

"Meet the nine o'clock train," he said. "You will find both nurse and food on board."

Blessed relief!

Montgomery still slept. I was divided in my mind as to whether he had been drugged or was sickening for the measles. He slept so heavily, and a pink rash was coming out over his face and neck. I was in an agony of anxiety. Houlahan was locked in her room and I had the key. I did not mean her to touch the baby in her condition.

The nine o'clock train from town was due at 10.05. I ordered the T-cart, and by fast driving reached the station just as the locomotive with its glowing Cyclops eye was turning the last curve. The groom sprang to the horses' heads and I hurried to the platform.

It was a superb night. The ugly

little station, with its gay flower beds and the name Hilltop done in white pebbles, was almost romantic in the moonlight.

The train brought much merchandise and but one passenger, a stately young lady in a close-fitting tailor-made costume and a black hat with plumes. She was not the person I wanted, and I called to the conductor to hold on for a moment.

"I'm expecting a nurse," I explained.

"Only one ticket to Hilltop, and there she is," he answered, professionally; "but there's a basket of bottles for you."

I now approached the lady.

"Can I be of any service?" I asked. "You expected to be met by friends?"

"I am a trained nurse going to Mr. Murray," she said, simply. "Are you he?"

"How stupid of me!" I stammered. "I am Mr. Murray, and much relieved and delighted to see you. Let me get your trunk, Miss—"

"Hetherington," she replied.

I helped her into the T-cart, and taking my place beside her, was turning the horses' heads homeward when she checked me.

"I think we must take the baby's food," she said.

Her voice was charming. Her gestures and the easy grace with which she carried herself denoted the woman of breeding.

While the groom fetched the basket my attention was free to wander from my horses to my companion. Her wide-brimmed hat threw the face into shadow, but I could see enough to note the loveliness of the delicate profile. It was not a merry face, though the lips yielded themselves readily to smiles; the eyes met yours with a concentrated attention which was probably the result of her training. Honora's mind had seldom lent itself unreservedly to my conversation, but then she was very much occupied with city reform clubs and College Settlements, and I knew her wandering attention—even when her eyes were fixed on a bonnet in front

of her—was but another proof of her superiority.

This young person puzzled me; my calculations were simply knocked endwise. A trained nurse meant to me an intelligent upper servant. I found myself in the presence of my social equal—nay, of my superior, for she was without the self-consciousness that was tormenting me.

I didn't know what to talk to her about. It is not easy to entertain strange young ladies about the unpleasantness of a drunken nurse and the necessity for weaning an infant. Still, some explanation of my troubles and her duties had to be made, and I resolved to make it in the most radical way.

I opened my lips to begin, and found myself saying:

"What a superb night it is! I had meant at this hour to be enjoying the moonlight on the ocean from the Cliffs at Newport, but I fancy it is more beautiful here. There is a mystery of haze and shadow in a hill country which you lose by the sea."

She did not seem to care about discussing the charms of the moon, though she responded with some polite commonplace. Presently she introduced the vital subject herself.

"Your little son has a worthless nurse, I believe, and you have decided to wean him."

I let the parentage of Montgomery pass without comment and gave her a rapid sketch of his short life, terminating with his exposure to measles and the backsliding of Houlahan.

"You may make your mind easy in regard to the measles," she said. "Young children rarely take contagious diseases."

I thought she made too light of the situation.

"He has already broken out with *something*," I said, reproachfully.

"Indeed?" was her only answer.

"He is either very ill, or he has been drugged," I went on, "for he has never waked since he returned from the funeral, and generally he's a lively little chap."

We turned in at the gate. Yells rent the air.

"Oh," I said, "it is measles, and not drugging."

"It's the cry of a hungry child," she said, smiling.

She disappeared up stairs, and in ten minutes quiet reigned in the house.

I bestirred myself to have a nice little supper laid for two, and told the waitress to beg Miss Hetherington to come down. She sent word that it would be impossible for her to leave the baby that night, and she needed nothing, as she had dined before leaving town.

I felt vexed, for I had wanted to consult with her as to the best way of dismissing Houlahan, and besides, I was most anxious to see her by lamp-light. I found myself speculating as to whether she would be equally lovely without her hat, and trying to puzzle out some story that would account for so fine a creature condescending to so humble a vocation. I could not rid myself of my prejudices against professional women.

I sent her a note, enclosing the key of Houlahan's door, and begging her to set the breakfast hour most convenient to herself.

The next day was Sunday, and when I came down at ten o'clock I heard Miss Hetherington had breakfasted hours before, that Houlahan was confined to her bed with a severe headache, and that Montgomery had taken his bottle like an angel.

At the end of an hour I saw a white-clad figure flitting under the trees. It was Miss Hetherington. She had Montgomery in her arms, and made a Madonna-like picture.

"How are the measles?" I asked, making my most courtly bow.

"They have resolved themselves into a severe case of prickly heat," she answered, laughing. "I understand he has been muffled in a heavy cloak and cap all through this terrible heat. I only wonder he did not melt away entirely."

"Advice to Young Mothers" never said a word about changing

his clothes in Summer," I said, solemnly.

"I see," she returned. "You have a book for consultation. May I see it?"

I got it for her, reluctantly, for I had marked what I considered important, and I have always valued my judgment too much to care to subject it to criticism.

Montgomery was asleep, and Miss Hetherington sat with him under the trees. I read my paper on the piazza, but I could see her quite well round the edge of my *Tribune*. Presently she took up the "Advice," and she laughed till she nearly dropped the child. I felt perfectly furious. I decided to spend the rest of the day in town, and consulted my time-table, only to find that a hyper-religious management forbade the running of Sunday trains.

In spite of my annoyance I looked forward to lunch as the excitement of the day, and was disgusted to meet the waitress going up stairs with a tray. I had expected to have nurse's meals served in this way—until I saw her! Now I was piqued and rather angry.

Toward three o'clock Miss Hetherington came out of the house in a flimsy sort of frock which showed her neck and arms under the flimsiness, and was much befrilled. She had on the hat with plumes and she carried a prayer-book. She spoke to me of her own accord.

"The baby is asleep and will not wake up for several hours, and your servants have offered to take turns in sitting with him while I walk to church. You know trained nurses are entitled to their time for exercise every day," she added, gravely.

"My dear Miss Hetherington," I exclaimed, "what do you take me for! Have I shown such a niggardly disposition during our short acquaintance that you have to excuse your moments of leisure to me? You make me ashamed!"

She asked some questions about the way to church, and I hastened to offer her the carriage, but she de-

clined it. Soon after she had gone I ordered it for myself, and by the time it was ready I imagined the service would be drawing to a close. The walk was both dusty and long—close to two miles—and I thought she could not resent my driving her home.

The little church at Hilltop was most picturesque. It was of a yellowish stone nearly covered with Japanese ivy, and crowned a little wooded eminence. The day was warm and still and the windows all open, so that the music floated to me as I waited under the trees. They were singing an anthem, "Oh, Rest in the Lord!" and it seemed to me a sort of religious lullaby. I felt soothed and strangely happy. One voice, a rich, sweet soprano, led the others. I felt it could belong only to Miss Hetherington, and I listened, spellbound. My groom—a Hilltop lad—left the horses' heads and under the pretense of adjusting a twisted rein, came close to the carriage.

"That's Mr. Cheatham's daughter singing. Don't she sing beautiful?" he asked.

Now Mr. Cheatham was my butcher. I hated the groom—he had dispelled an illusion.

In a moment the congregation came out, chiefly rich, second-rate country residents, a few English servants and the boarders at a hotel in the next village.

Miss Hetherington stood for a moment on the step, unfurling her parasol, and I approached her.

"I have come to drive you home," I said, diffidently, fearing a rebuff.

She colored slightly, but acquiesced with a murmur of thanks. Her conduct had hitherto conveyed the impression that she resented being treated as a guest, but required a recognition of her professional rights, and those only. I tried to keep my conversation on strictly business lines. We discussed the best mode of dealing with Houlahan, and decided that I should take her to town myself in the morning and start her on her journey across the continent.

We talked about nursery refrigerators till my tongue felt frozen, and I gravely asked her opinion about the short-coating of Montgomery.

We were getting on swimmingly when, at the top of a hill that lay before us, we saw a buggy dragged by a galloping horse and coming down on us at a frightful pace. As it drew near we saw there was a child in it. He was clutching the arm of the seat and screaming in a paroxysm of terror. I threw the reins to Miss Hetherington, and springing out, I stood ready to make a grasp for the bridle. Seeing me in the middle of the road, the horse slightly checked its speed, so that my task was easier than I had feared, but even so I was quite unable to keep my footing, and found myself half-running, half-swinging from the harness. However, I managed to stop the animal, and when the excitement of the moment was over I was hardly surprised to find I had wrenched my wrist so badly that it was giving me excruciating pain.

I led the runaway back to where the T-cart was waiting and tried to think out a plan by which the one able-bodied man of the party—Tom, the groom—could drive two vehicles at the same time, for I was completely out of the running.

"You are hurt," said Miss Hetherington, coming toward me. "You are as white as a sheet."

She manipulated my arm most deftly, giving me no pain. She made a sling of my handkerchief, and having bandaged my wrist with her own waist-ribbon, she slipped my arm into the support. The pain was so much diminished that I felt equal to driving, but she was opposed to any risk, and declared herself an accomplished whip.

Tom had been holding all three horses. I now bade him drive the child back to the village he came from, and helping Miss Hetherington to the driving seat with my uninjured hand, I took my place beside her. She picked up the reins; they seemed to fall of themselves into their proper

place, the motion of her strong yet pliant wrist testifying to the lightness of her hand.

I watched the almost perfect form with which she handled her horses, and finally, bursting with admiration, I exclaimed:

"How tremendously well you do it! Who taught you to drive?"

"Howlett," she said, simply.

I longed to ask why a trained nurse had needed lessons in driving from the great master in the art, but I knew my only chance with her lay in respecting her reserve, so we chatted about the runaway until we reached our own door.

How I blessed that sprain! One day I inked it to keep it black and blue, and when she put the wet compress on it the ink spread in the most convicting manner—but apparently she did not notice it.

I confided to her that my meals were distasteful to me because the waitress cut up my food so stupidly, and finally, by continued complaints, I persuaded her to dine with me in order to see that I was properly cared for.

She was so coy, this beautiful bird I had caged! Alas, my cage had an open door; she could fly away when she pleased.

I begrudged the hours I had to pass in town. If the telephone rang my heart was in my throat. I believe I could have welcomed bad news of Montgomery for the sake of exchanging a few words with Miss Hetherington over the wires.

Finally the dreaded moment arrived. She came to me in her white frock and demure little cap one afternoon, when I was smoking my cigar after getting home from town, and just when I was feeling that this wretched little cottage was the most perfect place on earth.

"I am wasting my time and your money, Mr. Murray," she said. "Any sensible nurse can manage the baby now, and you will pay her by the month what you pay me by the week."

"It isn't a question of money," I

answered. "If you knew what a difference your coming has made in the comfort of my house you would not speak of leaving me." There was entreaty in my tone.

"Still, I cannot stay on indefinitely," she answered, blushing and laughing. "I shall write to the Babies' Hospital for a nurse for you, and then I must go."

"You will wait for a few weeks to see the new nurse installed?" I pleaded. "You must see how helpless I am."

"A few days, perhaps," she conceded, reluctantly.

Suddenly a wave of shame spread over my face.

"Miss Hetherington!" I exclaimed, "I have never given you a cheque, and you have been here how long? Somehow I could not associate you with such sordid transactions."

The last speech nettled her and brought out the professional manner I had learned to dread.

"I have been here three weeks to-day," she said, coldly. "You owe me exactly seventy-five dollars."

I went into the house, and sitting down at my desk, I began filling out a cheque. When I came to the name I remembered I had never heard her full name. Throwing down my pen, I went back to the piazza to ask her, and then I saw something that set my heart beating.

Montgomery was in his carriage, wide awake and cooing, and Miss Hetherington knelt by his side. She was covering his dimpled hand with kisses and her eyes were full of tears. I could have flung myself down beside her, but I knew too well how such an ebullition would be received.

She sprang to her feet, and I put my question in my mannish, tactless way.

"My name? Mary," she answered.

"I might have known it," I burst out. "There was no possibility of its being anything else. It is the most adorable name in the world."

She looked at me in surprised displeasure, and picking up the child, disappeared with him into the house.

Would she never allow me to tell her what was burning to get itself told? I had only a week, at the utmost, and I did not dare face any more snubs that day.

IV

THERE is a tradition in my family of a town-bred ancestress who exclaimed: "What should we do for eggs and milk without that useful animal the cow?" This is my feeling in regard to the telephone. It transcends itself. I am not sure but that the King of Denmark would have got his boots for his coronation if he had only desired to have them sent by telephone instead of telegraph, the great drawback being that the useful animal did not exist in 1863.

By the telephone Houlahan's ticket and berth were secured to San Francisco; by the same means a nurse-maid was engaged from the Babies' Hospital—indeed, I had a *viva voce* conference with her, and agreed to bring her to Hilltop with me the next afternoon. The day of my bereavement was coming on apace, and I dared do nothing to show my unhappiness, for fear of precipitating the event.

On Tuesday a telegram came for Miss Hetherington. She appeared at dinner in her pretty, flimsy frock; it was an indication she felt her office as nurse at an end.

"My mother has arrived from Europe," she explained after a time, "and has sent for me to meet her tomorrow at the house in town. As my stay here would be for only a few more days, I have decided not to return, so I must ask you to send me and my trunk to the station in the morning. May I cut up your chop?"

"I don't want any more dinner," I said, sulkily.

"Are you ill? Does your wrist hurt you?" she asked, with a tone of concern.

"Something hurts me," I admitted, "but I think it's farther up my sleeve."

"Your shoulder?" she surmised.

"Up my sleeve and down again on the inside," I explained, not wishing to make the track to my heart too plain.

"Evidently too subtle a case for a nurse. Something, perhaps, that had better be left to the great physician Time—" and she smiled, half in mischief, half sadly.

How could she go so placidly through her dinner and even dawdle over a sweet course! Finally, when I saw her take a peach on her plate, I threw manners to the winds, and begging her to pardon the courtesy, I pushed back my chair and flung out to the piazza.

She must have heard my restless pacing up and down, and perhaps her feelings were touched, for in a few minutes she came through the lighted hall and stood in the doorway. Her eyes were blinded by the sudden transition to the dark piazza, and she softly called my name.

"I believe I left my knitting under the trees," she said. "Will you get it for me?"

"Show me which tree," I said, with guile.

Together we went down the steps and across the lawn. The moon was up, but a great hill shut out its jocose face as yet. When we reached the seat under the cedar I turned on her.

"Why did you tell your mother where you were?"

She drew herself up in the proud, resentful way I had grown to know so well, but the real distress in my voice softened her.

"Not tell my mother! What terms do you suppose I am on with her, that you can conceive of my concealing my whereabouts from her?"

If I had dared I should have answered: "Beastly, since she can afford to own a town house and take her pleasure in Europe, while you work for your living;" but self-preservation made me crawl.

"Forgive me," I said. "The misery—I mean the dislike—of losing your company makes me unreasonable."

It seemed to strike her that her re-

lation to her mother might be open to misconstruction on the part of an outsider, for she said, with some feeling:

"I should like to tell you how I came to be a nurse, if you care to hear."

"Care to hear!" I repeated. "Isn't it plain enough that you are all I do care to hear about? Don't you see how it is with me—that I love you? Can't you like me a little bit? enough—enough to marry me, Mary?" and I sank on the seat beside her in a passion of pleading.

"How can you!" she began, with tears in her voice. "How can you expect me to believe in the affection of a man who can speak like this to me within four months of his wife's death! Oh, Mr. Murray!"

"I'm not a widower!" I exclaimed, in horror.

"Is Mrs. Murray alive? Then you insult me!"

It dimly came to me that she had once called Montgomery my son. What an ass I was!

"There never was a Mrs. Murray," I began; but this capped the climax, for, without waiting to hear another word, she stalked proudly toward the house.

"Miss Hetherington—Mary," I commanded, "stop and listen to me. There was a Mrs. Murray—the baby's mother—but she was my brother's wife. Oh, my love, my love! how can you be so suspicious and cruel, when you know how you hurt me?"

And then and there she turned and held out her hands, and that curious old fossil of a moon came out and spied on us.

It often happens with people in love that they have talked themselves out before the engagement point is reached, but with Mary and me there was no such embarrassment. We had whole histories to tell each other. Mary told me how her father had lost his money soon after she was grown up, and how the distress and mortification had really killed him; that she and her mother had lived abroad on their small income, and at the end of two years her mother had married an

extremely rich man, whom Mary found unbearable; that she had come back to this country and taken her hospital training with her mother's full consent, for they were so truly sympathetic that Mrs. Hetherington—now Mrs. Mines—would not think of insisting on her sharing an uncongenial home. She had, however, made over what was left of their money to Mary, so that she had some means beyond her professional income.

And I told her about my life and about Phil, and about everything except Honora Standard. Viewed in the light of my great happiness, that episode shrank to such pitiful proportions that it did not seem worth mentioning.

At this point of our conversation came the sound of wheels at the front gate, and the postboy's lantern glowed red in the moonlight.

"There may be a letter from my mother," said Mary, rising, and I reluctantly abandoned our seat under the cedar and followed her to the house.

The letter proved to be for me, in Phil's crabbed fist, and I might as well give it, though I blush for him:

Paris, August 10.

DEAR MONT:

Don't think me cold-hearted when I tell you I am engaged again [the "again" was scratched out], but I shall not be married till my six months of mourning are past. I think you know my dear girl. It is Honora Standard. I found her and

her mother in Paris, and I don't know how it happened, but somehow we seemed to fall in love with each other at once. Isn't she perfectly great! You, who know her, can judge of my luck. All Paris is ringing with the amount of Uncle Dangerfield's fortune. I wonder who let the cat out of the bag! I say, Mont, isn't it queer to be rich?

Mrs. Standard and Honora say they think the way you took charge of my baby was splendid. They long to see you, to tell you so.

Your aff'ate brother,

PHILIP MURRAY.

P. S.—Honora says if you are tired of the baby we will take charge of him as soon as we are married.

"Well, that is handsome of Phil!" I said, in tones of suppressed indignation. "He is willing to take charge of his own child in case he is forced to!"

Mary put her dear arm round my neck.

"If they feel that way, don't you think he might stay always with his uncle and aunt?" and she blushed most divinely as she mentioned her future relationship to Montgomery.

I am not by nature secretive, but there are two things about which I have been reticent. I have never told Mary how near Mrs. Standard came to bagging my fortune instead of Phil's; and in view of certain admonitory letters sent to Manila, I have never told Phil that Mary was a trained nurse.



FRIENDSHIP

THY kindness wraps me as in silken folds
 And shields me from the keenest winds that blow;
 Thy strong hand clasps my weak one, and upholds
 Me on the stony path wherein I go.
 Such kindness I have never known before,
 But oh, dear friend, it should be less—or more!

EDITH BIGELOW.

THE KEY

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

ALL that I craved belonged to me;
God held the gifts, and I the key

He held them waiting my command,
And yet I would not understand.

In petulance and discontent
Full many a wasted year was spent.

I cried, "How cruel is the Fate
That bids me work and weep and wait

"For things that make life worth the living,
Nor rob the Giver in the giving.

"A little joy, a little wealth,
Result for toil, abundant health,

"A chance to *do*, a chance to *be*—"
And then I looked—and saw the key!

Right in my heart I carried it,
Divinely fashioned, formed to fit

The lock of God's great Reservoir,
Which held the things I thirsted for.

The key was Love, pure gold, a-crust
With glittering gems of swerveless trust.

It fits all doors, it turns all locks,
It leads the way through walls and rocks,

It lifts the bolt, unbars the gate,
And shows where all life's treasures wait.

Oh, are there heights thy feet would press?
Use Love, the key to all success!



ALL THE STYLE

JAGGLES—What's the proper thing to have your suit case covered with?
WAGGLES—Foreign labels.

THE WOMAN WHO LOOKED AHEAD

A FABLE FOR THE FAIR

THERE was once a Woman who Became the Admiration of her Friends, owing to the Manner in which she Employed the Period of her Engagement to the Man of her Choice. She was Far from Wasting the Hours in Matinées and Walks and Drives, as did the Other young Women of her Acquaintance. She went to Cooking Classes, Home Nursing Lectures and Kindergarten Training Schools instead.

"Marriage," said she, "is a Serious Thing. It is Sickening to me to Observe Women rush Lightly into the Solemn Responsibilities of the Home and of Motherhood, entirely Without any Previous Training." So that at the Time of her Marriage there was Very Little that she Did Not Know.

Her Husband had Regretted the Loss of the Matinées, the Walks and the Drives during the time of their Engagement. "Now that we are Married," he said, "I Hope you will Find the Time for Some of These Things. It will be a Gay Season in town this year. We will Improve the Passing Hour."

"I am Glad," replied his Wife, "that One of us can Look Beyond the Passing Hour into the Future. I am Convinced that Failure to do this is Responsible for the Wrecked Families we see All About us. For You and Me the City is all Very Well, but we Owe our Helpless, Innocent Children a Better Home. Children need the Country. They must Grow up in the Midst of Cows and Hay and Green Trees. Any Book will Tell you That. An Apartment is not a Home."

So they Bought an Abandoned Farm on the Outskirts of a Suburb and Built Up a Home there. The Woman was Sustained by her Principles, but her Husband Disliked the Country. In Time he Lost his Digestion Catching Trains. Quite Often he Lost his Trains, too. On the Whole, they were Not very Happy there. And they Never Had any Children.

This teaches us that Prevention is Sometimes Worse than Cure.

JOSEPHINE D. DASKAM.



EQUIVOCAL EMBARRASSMENT

WE once were taught: "Do good by stealth
And blush to find it fame," but now
A man who uses well his wealth
Has got to make it known somehow.

And if he blushes in these days—
Supposing always that he could—
It doesn't follow that his ways
Have been particularly good.

E. PERCY NEVILLE.

SOME ENGLISH PRINCESSES

By Mrs. Sherwood

I HOPE the amiable Princess Beatrice is to be one of those fortunate women who "have no history." She was sheltered from the storms of life by her mother's great partiality, until Fate, tired of seeing her so calmly happy, took away her beloved Henry of Battenberg, who died of fever contracted in the horrible Boer land, leaving her with her aged mother and four children to occupy her broken heart as best they could.

Now that the Queen has gone the status of the Princess in England is very much changed; she can no longer live in a palace; she steps down from Osborne House to a smallish house in the beautiful Isle of Wight, of which she is the Governor. The Queen left a million dollars to her, as to each of her other daughters—prudent old Queen! But the Princess Beatrice must now yield precedence to her nieces, daughters of the reigning monarch, Edward the Seventh. And the King has issued a Royal command that his sisters can no longer order a Royal carriage from the Royal stables. This may seem to outsiders a small and absurd thing for a great king to do, but about the English Court everything is tied up with red tape. It has always been necessary—so Lady Ely told me—to order one's carriage from the Royal stables the day before it is required, even to drive about London. She came to see me in Harley street in one of the Queen's carriages, and I noticed as she left my door the curious crowds attracted by the sight of the Royal crest. Of course, as a lady-in-waiting she was entitled to the privi-

lege, but, as she afterward said: "It is much shorter work to take a cab." However, in England they think much of these privileges.

I do not believe, however, that princesses have a "very good time." Lord Houghton used to say that we Americans were the only people who *said* we "had a good time." I asked him if we were not the only people who really *had* "a good time." Certainly we have none of the chains of gilded slavery hanging about us, as have the daughters of Royalty. The princes always have the freedom of boyhood and manhood, and if they do not make any entangling alliances, and sometimes if they do, they can and do have a "very good time"—always excepting poor Rudolph of Austria, who, an old Austrian Court lady told me, was whipped to death and every bone in his body broken by the uncles of the pretty girl who died with him. This is an ugly legend, but probably true. Certainly his mother, the beautiful Empress, never smiled again after he was found dead, and her own life and her cruel death are one of the tragedies of Royalty. The very lifting of a young girl to a throne often is the beginning of misery that arrests her own individual development and happiness. She is something to be gazed at and talked about and criticised, but never to know the joy of freedom. The throne overshadows many a passionate heart beating high for love and liberty, which it is never to possess.

Of the daughters of Queen Victoria the Crown Princess of Germany, now the Empress Dowager, mother to the

redoubtable William, had the most talent and the least beauty, with the apparently happy lot of being wife to the best fellow in Europe, "Unser Fritz;" but she had a lifelong quarrel with his mother, with Bismarck and with the German people. They all hated her and accused her of a flirtation with her faithful servant, Seckendorf; even now, in her dying days, they publish accounts of her secret marriage to him. Her devotion to her "Unser Fritz" did not stop their mouths. Well may the Emperor say, as he did at Bonn the other day, that "the German fault is envy and hatred of other Powers." This Princess-Empress put the final touch to her unpopularity by her mistake in refurnishing with English furniture, for Queen Victoria on one of her visits, the apartments of the beautiful Queen Louise, the high priestess of the German people. This nearly provoked a riot. Why should a clever woman have made such a blunder? Because she has her mother's fault of a very dogged obstinacy! "My will or nothing," has been the motto of both.

Then she had a lifelong quarrel with her son. Many an old clergyman, looking on, has condemned him, perhaps unjustly, and has quoted the tremendous Scripture, "He who mocketh at his father and obeyeth not the law of his mother, the eagles of the mountain shall pluck out his eye, and the young eagles shall eat it," as the medical experts all over the world tell of his disease of the ear, and claim that it mounts to the brain and will eventually push out one of his eyes. Furthermore, this Princess of Great Britain had to see her Fritz die the dreadful death of cancer in the throat, and now has to meet a lingering death herself. Yet she had many years of honor and splendor. Queen Victoria always gave her precedence over all the other children, except the Prince of Wales.

The Princess Helena, who married Prince Christian, always living in Cumberland Lodge, near Windsor

Castle, sharing in all the Royal festivities and attending her mother at many public affairs, seemed to have the calmest, most respectable of uneventful lives. She wrote a very good biography of her charming sister Alice, a most unhappy Princess but one of the saints of this world.

The Duke of Hesse, who married this dear girl, was not true to her, and his mistress, or morganatic wife, as she claimed to be, published a book that threw much light on the unhappiness of this admirable woman, who could never speak even to her mother of her heart-break. Poor Alice! she loved her little children, and she had to see one of her boys killed by falling out of a window of that cruel stone palace to the ground; and another sickened and died of diphtheria, whose dying breath she drew in with his last kiss, thus in a pious way committing suicide—as many think, intentionally. She was not sorry to die, perhaps, poor Alice, best and sweetest and most saintly of the Queen's daughters. It is her daughter who is the present Czarina of Russia—and oh, how she pleaded with her grandmother to not make her marry the Czar! She dreaded Russia, and she has not had a bed of roses there. How should we like to tread every day over a floor that we know has been undermined by anarchists? Yet that is the fate of the Czarina of Russia. Her sister, called "the Royal Ophelia," has been the most unhappy wife of a Grand Duke.

The gay and very pretty Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyle, has had the character and talent to make for herself an independent career. Falling in love with her brother's tutor, the handsome Canon Duckworth, when very young, her correspondence with him was discovered by a lady-in-waiting and carried to the Queen. Woe to the Princess Louise from that moment! and woe to the lady-in-waiting, to whom she has never spoken since! I met them both at Aix and witnessed the chilling cold shoulder of Royalty; for if a princess can do nothing else

she can snub royally, and her snubs kill!

The Queen married off her royal Louise to a subject, the Marquis of Lorne, as all the world knows; a very clever man, who has had "a blessed blue time of it" ever since, as a London wit observes. Always walking on a different carpet from his wife, being reminded of the difference of rank forty times a day, it is only the fact that Louise is so sprightly, so pretty and so knowing that has kept them together. She is fond of saying that, for fear they would have to marry her, "two men got married and three left England." Not that they would not have liked her if she had been Lady Louise or Miss Louise, or barmaid Louise—for she is a June rose and as gifted as she is pretty; but they all dreaded to be a Royal son-in-law and to be made to feel every day the penalty of the slightest infringement of the stiffest etiquette in the world. It was freely asserted at the first Jubilee that the grooms were told to put a thistle under the saddle of the Marquis of Lorne, as the Royal procession left Buckingham Palace for Westminster Abbey. He was to have ridden in the procession of princes, but he did not. Three times he was thrown, and later on he crept round by Bird Cage Walk with a very sullen and discontented face, on a sorry nag, and joined the Royalties there! It was even said that the Crown Prince of Germany, "Unser Fritz," afterward Emperor, had been a party to this outrage, as he had remonstrated with the Queen for permitting a man not of Royal blood to ride with him and the Prince of Wales in the pageant, in what was the prettiest bit of all that picture, the procession of princes. I happened to see this historic spectacle myself.

Afterward I met the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne at Aix. I think they take the situation philosophically, as both are scholars, artists and individuals above the average intellectually. She is a very gifted woman, a good sculptor, a first-rate artist with her pencil and one of

the most charming women I ever met. She showed her independence of character by shaking off the tyranny of courts at Aix and dancing the "Highland schottische" in the public room at the Casino. The French people thought it was the cancan, which in its lively attitudes it resembles, and a dozen old English ladies wrote to the Queen the next day!

The Princess Louise got a good scolding, and the Marquis of Lorne was sent on for his wife. She left soon after, to everyone's sorrow, for she enhanced the gaiety of nations, as Garrick's death killed it. "I never was a favorite of the Queen," she said, quite frankly.

It was pathetic to see how she loved innocent fun, how she sighed for it. Now that she is Duchess of Argyle and the favorite sister of King Edward the Seventh, she may have a broader life. She used to give delightful teas at old Kensington Palace, and was fond of the society of artists and literary people. She "sent for" Wagner and met him at Lord Houghton's, to the great delight of little Mr. Haweis, who wrote "Music and Morals," and who had the honor of arranging the meeting. With these talents and a cheerful temper, the Princess Louise has had "a good time." Not so good as she would have had as the daughter of an earl, or of one still lower down in the scale of human greatness. They all have good health, these daughters of the Queen, and the Princess Louise has the air of never having known a pain or an ache. Everyone will remember her redoubtable following of a salmon in the waters of the Restigouche in Canada. It was a treat to hear how her strong young arms and her pedestrian powers enabled her to catch her fish.

The Princess Beatrice is taller, paler and more lymphatic than Louise. On the 14th of April, 1889, she reached her twenty-eighth birthday at Aix, and I happened to be there and to see her on that occasion. She struck me as a pretty, rather stout girl with an American look about her that we ca-

turn-up nose." The French have a prettier name for it, the "*nez Watteau*." Tennyson calls it "a nose tip-tilted like a flower"—prettiest of all.

She has the best eyes in the Royal family. They are fine brown eyes, well set in her head, not that "*fleur de tête*" eye on the outside of her face, which the Queen inherited from George the Third. She has very charming, fresh red lips and a clear white complexion. She is the most simple-mannered, retiring person I ever saw, and the whole English colony united in presenting her with flowers, while all Aix and Chambéry were full of flags and feathers, and bands of music and presentations. She looked frightened to death. She was plainly dressed, as are all Englishwomen on the Continent. No Royalties like to be in war paint when off duty. The Princess was very courteous and smiling, and blushed and stammered as she tried to thank her loyal subjects for their good wishes. In the evening a *fête* had been arranged in her honor at the Villa Mollet, that dependence of the Hôtel de l'Europe, where the Queen lived while at Aix, and the whole place was lighted by colored lanterns, while the local choral unions of Chambéry and Aix marched about, singing "God Save the Queen," "The Marseillaise" and the "Partant pour la Syrie." Fireworks burst from every wooded nook and corner, and from a splendid arch that bore the Royal arms and the order of "George and the Dragon." In colored lights came illuminated the motto, "*Dieu et Mon Droit*," and the name of "Beatrice" shone from many an arch and house front.

For an hour I thought it was a great thing to be a princess, but as I said so to a lady-in-waiting, she shook her head. However, Prince Henry of Battenberg, her affianced lover, was coming that evening, and she doubtless was very happy then and there and for a long time afterward; for she had fought for him stoutly. The Prince of Wales did not like the match, and the Crown Prince and

Princess of Germany were bitterly opposed, as he was only a mediatised Prince; but the Queen carried out the wishes of her favorite daughter and made the match with Battenberg possible. It was, in its short duration, very happy, and the Queen gracefully referred to her widowed daughter in these touching terms: "The baby when the Prince Consort died, the only one who has never left me, I must now try to bridge over the sad gulf made in her young life by the death of her husband, my dearly loved son-in-law; and I am astonished to see with what patience and fortitude she is bearing this great grief, the greatest that can come to a woman."

My attention was first called to the Princess Beatrice by some very charming papers she wrote for *Good Words*, that clever English periodical which was started, I believe, by Dickens. She described a cure she had taken at Aix-les-Bains for rheumatism. Her description was comprehensive, gay, historical and spirited, and foreshadowed for me that delightful Alpine valley which I was afterward to know so well. She was very much impressed by the religious and mediæval character of the people. I was afterward to meet her at the little stone villages of Clarefond, Miery and Monxy, where the peasants still live as they did a thousand years ago, and their children look like pictures by Rembrandt. I met her on the Lac du Bourget, which is of such a greenish blue that it seems as if a flight of mysterious peacocks had left their trailing feathers in it. It lies at the foot of those mountains over which Hannibal took his elephants into Italy by the Little St. Bernard.

Always in attendance on the Queen, this placid girl did not seem to have any individual life of her own. I afterward found that she had a great deal of character; and in a queer little stone village, where the peasants live under the same roof as their horses and cows, their goats and their sheep, where the women wear a gold heart and cross outside their linen

chemisettes as they did hundreds of years ago, this Queen's daughter had made the most sensible and charitable arrangement for having a poor little lame boy cured of his deformity. He is a stout young peasant now, able to make a good living, and he calls his eldest daughter Beatrice. At that primitive hotel, the Chambottes, where she dined and lunched often, there hangs an autographed photograph of her, presented to the delighted landlady by this gracious young Princess, who had won all their hearts.

"It is very nice to be a Princess," so far as power of giving happiness is concerned. This may recompense her for the freedom of which she is deprived and for the men she "did not marry." But every woman wants her own way occasionally.

The romance of the life of the Princess Beatrice has yet to be fully told. When a young girl she was very fond of the Prince Imperial, Eugène Louis Jean Joseph, the son of Eugénie and the Emperor Louis Napoleon of France, who was killed in Zululand on the 1st of June, 1879. He dearly loved Beatrice, poor boy! and his mother desired the marriage very much, of course. It is said Beaconsfield broke it all up for State reasons, and then Eugène Louis Jean Joseph wanted to go off and be killed. In the Chapelle Ardente of the Edsalls in Windsor Castle, when one sees the beautiful cenotaph showing how he lay after death, with the Zulu assegai wound in his heart, one thinks of that other wound which he had suffered in life. Had they been Darby and Joan they might have been happy. There is engraved on the side of his memorial tomb a beautiful letter to the Queen, written by this noble boy born to be sacrificed to the whim of a prime minister.

When thousands gathered at Camden House to honor his funeral, the Queen and Princess Beatrice coming first, the Queen knelt and prayed at the foot of the coffin, placing on it a wreath of gold laurel leaves with her card. The Princess threw herself on

the platform that led up to the coffin, weeping bitterly. She then placed a wreath of porcelain flowers on the coffin. "I wish it to last forever," she said, and a card was hidden in it with the single word, "Beatrice."

The Prince and Princess of Wales sent a wreath of purple violets and white clematis, and the Prince wrote with his own hand, "In token of affectionate regard for the Prince who lived the most spotless of lives and died a soldier's death, fighting England's cause in Zululand."

Now had they all been as much interested, before he left, in marrying him to Beatrice, all this affecting picture would have been spoiled, but a woman's heart and a man's career might have been saved.

It is not to be wondered at that the Empress of the French, the beautiful Eugénie, very much loves Beatrice. The story goes that she has made her her heir, and she has a very large fortune to leave. Eugénie is our Lady of Calamity, and although not a princess born, has had her share of Royal trials. She is now a white-haired, elderly woman, with, however, the *beau reste*. She is very *grande dame*, and bears her lot in dignified retirement at Chiselhurst, in England.

The Royal Princesses of England are very much in request for the opening of charity bazaars and fairs. They do this service most gracefully. They are all religious, good women and great favorites with the high dignitaries of the Church. It is a great thing to be a bishop anywhere, but in England, to see a bishop escorting a princess is to get up to the Matterhorn, or at least to the Jungfrau, of the smart set. I had the pleasure once in London to attend a "Masque at the Inner Temple" given by the Benchers to the Princess Louise. She is a barrister, a Bench-er herself, and looks, in her black cap and gown, as old Pepys would say, "mighty pretty." They had a play by Ben Jonson in the library, and beautiful music and processions in the grand old Temple Church, and the

gravest and grandest of England's law lords marched with this young woman at their head. She was captain, then, I thought.

In her amusing novel of "A Self-Made Countess," John Strange Winter makes a very great deal of this bazaar-opening power of the Princesses.

No one asks if a princess has a heart. She is in this world for political reasons; she is yet a part of the national entourage; she must suffer and be silent, and this the Princess Beatrice has learned to do.

She was doubtless very fond of the Queen, faithfully obeying her through many dull years, and she was a very pretty figurehead at the Royal dinners. General Grant told me that when he and Mrs. Grant were invited to "dine and sleep" at Windsor Castle he was very much astonished that he was not asked to sit next the Queen; but she put her daughter Beatrice between them and talked across her to him. "The Queen was flanked," he said, with soldierly frankness, "by the Duke of Connaught on one side and by Beatrice on the other, as if none but her own blood were good enough to touch her." Not but that he very much admired the Princess.

At the Jubilee ceremonies I used to see the Princesses Beatrice and Helena (Princess Christian) keeping step behind their little, short mother. They used to look respectfully tired and bored by this task, as she walked around to receive a crowd. And imagine it going on forever! Imagine the deep and lasting disappointment of a life which, starved of its better independence, must be spent in waiting in the shadow of someone else's glory. The shadow of a queen!

I remember them in this attitude at the public festivities of the Jubilee at Windsor Castle and in the Park, where I went to see the Queen lay the cornerstone of the statue to Prince Albert, the women's Jubilee offering to her Majesty. The Queen was very much gratified. She spoke to a poor old woman who, it was said, had walked from Scotland to be present

at the Jubilee—at least I heard the Queen say: "I thank you for taking that long walk to come to my Jubilee." Then she shook hands with the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who was just being forgiven for having married Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who was young enough to be her grandson.

All the love of power and the vanity that is born in us naturally were gratified for fifty years in the life of Victoria. But there was little to gratify the hearts of her daughters. They were merely part of the stage setting for the star's performance.

On the occasion referred to the Queen entered her victoria with a sweep; her two Scotch gillies—or her Indian attendants, I forget which—mounted the rumble; the two pale Princesses sat humbly opposite her. And so the Royal cortège disappeared toward that fairylike vision, Windsor Castle.

It will be a blow to these Princesses, now, to walk behind the new Queen and their Royal nieces. They have become of very little consequence. The law of primogeniture has made all women accustomed to being pushed into the corner when the head of the family dies, but few have so far to fall as has Beatrice, the favorite daughter of the Queen. She was doubtless happy enough with Prince Henry of Battenberg. She doubtless loves her children, yet she may marry, as she is a personable woman yet, and her mother left her very well off. Her life, which must be fraught with ennui and disappointment, and now, doubtless, will be made more tiresome by the restrictions of rank, presents a great lesson, the more pathetic that there are no great tragedies in it, only a continuous, perpetual shipwreck, an eternal sense of failure, the outward promise of success with none of its rewards; far from the glorious stimulus of work, with no future, and leashed by the fear of doing wrong and incurring the enmity of kindred. For if the Princess Beatrice should wish to marry a private gentleman, or even one noble and yet not Royal,

her brothers and sisters would object, the Battenberg children would object, and if they did not put her in the Tower, might ostracize her; and if they did not cut off her head, might break her heart, and probably would.

As one sees the splendid paraphernalia of Royalty it looks very interesting to American eyes, and we see the poetry, which to the tired actors behind the scenes has almost lost all its meaning. It is inspiriting to arrive in the noble quadrangle of Buckingham Palace, to hear the music of the Guards' Band, to see the

silent, splendid figures of the household troops, the handsomest men in the world. We long to know the men and women who are there either by divine right or by some lucky chance. They are the personages of the hour. The historical palace, the gems of art and those interesting objects of which palaces are such grand conservatories are all interesting.

Why are the faces that greet us so pale and weary? Can it be that a princess does not "have a good time?"



MORT D'AMOUR

WITHOUT a moan, without a parting word,
Love turned away his weary face and died—

He had but one pale mourner at his side,
And through the lonely night she wept, unheard
Of any save the prying wind that stirred

The draperies of the window where the tide
Of dawn poured in at last; and hollow-eyed,
She groped her way, by restless sorrow spurred,
To seek where she might best Love's burial crave.

But Fate refused to grant her any place
Wherein to hide him. "Nay, poor soul," said she,
"Dead Love may never lie within a grave;
But you must watch beside his changèd face,
Through bitter years of barren constancy!"

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



NOT TO BE DECEIVED

"I WONDER," said Fenderson, "if Mrs. Gayleigh reads all the stories the newspapers print about her."

"Of course not," replied Grimshaw. "Even if she did, you don't suppose she'd believe them, do you?"



THE GENUINE MANUFACTURERS

THE PROFESSOR—Who are the men who make history?
THE PUPIL—The historians.

THE COIFFING

WITH skill and grace in days that were,
 In Louis Seize's sunny France,
 He needs must strive, a brave *coiffeur*,
 A beauty's beauty to enhance.

The while she dreams of hunt and dance,
 Amid the scent of musk and myrrh,
 He combs and curls, as in a trance,
 And clips a tress, unmarked by her.

And in the smile that slants her eyes,
 My lady wonders, worldly-wise,
 What hands will rumple this coiffure;
 While, doomed to build another's snare,
 He toils with fingers skilled and sure,
 Whose love may only touch her hair.

EDGAR P. SHANKS.



ANALYZING HIS AFFECTION

THE young lovers sat beside the waterfall. The rapids and the near-by whirlpool had a strange attraction for the romantic young girl. She had heard the story of the unhappy Indian maiden and the young brave who had gone to their doom, clasped in each other's arms, to the slow music of the Swan Song. That seemed very beautiful to her.

"Jack," she said, "if you saw me struggling in the water near the edge of the falls, would you jump in after me?"

"What would be the use, my dear, when I can't swim?" he answered.

"But at least we should perish together," she replied, bravely.

"Yes, there would be no doubt of that," he returned, shuddering at the sound of the cruel waters.

"But haven't you often said you would die for me?" she asked, piqued at his coldness.

"No, my dear," replied her practical lover. "If you'll remember, I've always told you that I had an undying love for you!"

J. J. O'CONNELL.



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

SHÉ—The fortune-teller says I shall marry money.
 HE—Good! Did she say how I was to make it?

THE QUEEN'S LOVE

By Justus Miles Forman

"**L**OVE," sighed the King, "is a divine distemper."

"Your Majesty is ever profound," agreed the Premier; "it is indeed a distemper."

"I said a divine distemper," corrected the King, gently.

The Prime Minister's expression was deferential but stubborn.

"That," said the King, answering an unspoken dissent, "is because you have no soul. What would a mere Prime Minister be doing with a soul, anyhow?"

"Souls have ever been the sole prerogative of kings," murmured the Councillor. "I retract the pun," he added, hastily. "It was perhaps unworthy of me."

The King smiled.

"Unworthy of you?" he queried, with raised brows. "Oh, I don't know," he said, unkindly.

The Minister's color deepened slightly to a rich full-bodied maroon, and the King allowed himself a pleased chuckle.

"Charles, Charles!" he grieved, presently, "you should never cherish evil passions. Your eyes shriek regicide to deafen one, and regicide is so indiscreet. You know what they do to regicides when they catch them, Charles. And they'd catch you easily; you couldn't run. You haven't the waist you once had."

"You have the advantage of me there, sire," said the Premier, viciously; "your Majesty's waist extends from your legs to your royal shoulders."

The King allowed himself another chuckle and held up to the light appreciatively his little glass of *eau de vie de Dantzig*.

"May I ask, Charles," he inquired, "if you have read the fables of the late M. de La Fontaine?"

The stout gentleman across the table growled.

"Why do you want to drink that stuff?" he demanded. "Why can't you drink whiskey and brandy, like a Christian? You won't have any stomach left at forty."

The King turned the glass between his fingers, and the thousand little particles of gold leaf in the liqueur—if gold leaf it is—sparkled and shimmered in the light.

"My dear, my dear," he protested, gently, "again your limitations! A liqueur fit to wake the blessed Olympians is as far above and beyond you as the divine distemper of love. You have never loved, Charles."

"Thank God!" said the stout gentleman, feelingly.

"Now I—" continued his Majesty.

The Minister allowed himself an obvious sneer.

"—I have a soul; a soul above whiskey and—and materialism."

"A soul for flavored sirups and your neighbor's wife," suggested his companion, helpfully.

The King waved a pained protest.

"You put things so baldly," he complained. "My admiration for the Countess is a matter of affinity. We are kindred souls—"

"I won't believe it of her!" cried the Premier.

"Her husband does not understand her in the least. Her husband is a clod."

"Her husband," observed the Minister, "will some day break his sword-hilt over your august head, and I sha'n't blame him."

"Charles, Charles!" murmured the shocked sovereign, "I should have you tried for *lèse-majesté* if there were anyone else to quarrel with meanwhile. I'm not sure that it wouldn't be rather fun, anyhow. *Mais tiens, tiens*, the carriage waits, my lord—I mean the ball. Those poor things can't dance till I come, can they? Run along, *Falstaff*. We'll find the Queen in the ante-room, and she'll have been waiting half an hour. Lord! what a frame of mind she will be in!"

His Majesty led a very stately and not over-exciting quadrille with the wife of the Russian Ambassador. Afterward he skipped about with the Duchesse de Saint-Martel, and told her that their steps suited perfectly, which was a lie. Then he waltzed with the Queen. "Not that I'm giving you the time of your life," he explained to her, "but this sort of thing seems to be required. Waltzing with you is such a lark, Elena!" he continued, untruthfully. "There is a certain warmth about it, a something of—of abandon, a something of repressed passion."

The Queen favored him with a withering glare, and he chuckled.

When the dance was finished he fled to the little Winter garden with its palms and roses and cool dimness and splashing water. The half-dozen couples in possession of the retreat went out at once, backward, and the King called up one of the two gentlemen-in-waiting who had followed him.

"Find the Countess zu Ehrenstern and bring her here," he said.

The Countess appeared with flattering promptness, and the gentlemen-in-waiting, being discreet gentlemen and some time in service, effaced themselves gracefully.

The Countess was an extremely pretty woman, Russian by birth, yellow haired, with wide-set Tartar eyes and a wicked mouth, a very attractive mouth. Her reputation was no worse than that of a dozen others of the Court set, but her presence bore no odor of sanctity. She had a curiously provocative air with men, a

speculative light in her slanting eye, as to say: "Well, what are you going to dare next?"

His Majesty smiled a welcome and the Countess zu Ehrenstern curtsied profoundly, very profoundly, for she had splendid arms and shoulders, and they showed to advantage in a genuflection. The Countess's black gown with the gold spangles might have been called indiscreet. It was undeniably becoming.

The King laughed appreciatively.

"You are immense, Varvara!" he approved. "Come and sit down."

"I have your Majesty's permission?" murmured the Countess.

"You have my Majesty's command," declared the King.

The Countess sat down on the long wicker garden bench where the King had made himself comfortable, and raised both arms to adjust an apparently safe aigrette of tulle and diamonds. She bore the shoulders ever in mind.

His Majesty's eyes showed a strong glint of amusement and he made as if to applaud dumbly. The Countess had the grace to blush.

"The wise fools," observed the King, "who hold that one's little tricks and graces are most successful when they succeed in deceiving, are wrong. Now, if I were a fool, Varvara, I might be quite as fond of you as I am, but I couldn't admire you half so much. You're an artist, Varvara."

"*Le Roi s'amuse*," murmured the lady, sulkily, and examined with close attention a very much bejeweled hand.

"*Natürlich*," admitted his Majesty, examining with even closer attention the same hand. "What else is there for a king to do? Though I'm inclined to believe that in this particular case," he continued, examining another hand—"in this particular case amusement is so strongly tinged with something else that it is in danger of becoming—becoming—Fill in the word for me, Varvara."

"I—I don't know anything about such matters," protested the Countess zu Ehrenstern, unconvincingly.

"You see," complained her sovereign, "a king is such a cabined, cribbed and damnably confined beast! He can't say: '*Tiens*, there's a new piece at the Palais Royal that is said to be uncommonly wicked—I'll run up on the Orient Express to Paris to see it;' or, 'There's a new American troupe opening in London next week—I'll go see if it is as good as it ought to be.' He can't go and play at Monte Carlo as he'd like to. It would make a tremendous row. He can't spend a month or two at Shepheard's during the season, to see the pretty American girls that talk through their noses. He can't do anything that other men of spirit and sporting tastes spend their lives doing. He's a king, and that means a graven image who isn't supposed to care about anything but signing bills and quarreling with fool advisers. And the worst of it is, nobody even asked me if I wanted to be a king. It isn't fair. However," continued his Majesty, slowly, looking into the eyes of the Countess zu Ehrenstern, "there are compensations."

"Is it nothing to be able to command, sire? Your Majesty is monarch of all you survey," murmured the Countess, dropping her eyes.

The King surveyed his monarchy with interest.

"Why, then," said he, "why, then, it's quite time I took possession."

"Heavens! not there!" cried the Countess. "Powder comes off, as you ought to know by this time. There is—" she hesitated, "there is nothing on my lips."

"That," said the King, "can be remedied."

It was.

"As I said not long since," pursued his Majesty, after a pause, "there are compensations for the troubles of a poor monarch."

The Countess appeared to be regaining her breath.

"But you have no idea of what a stupid life I lead, Varvara. If it weren't for you I believe I'd cut it and run. Of course, there's Charles. I derive some satisfaction from bait-

ing Charles; but that grows monotonous."

"The Duke?" she inquired.

"The Duke, precisely. Charles was unkind enough this evening to predict that your excellent husband would one day break a sword hilt over my august head. Charles is at times shockingly plain-spoken."

The Countess giggled. "What are you going to do about the Count?" she asked, presently. "Charles isn't bright, I know, but then—well, he isn't exactly a fool, either."

"Oh, we'll send Uriah to the wars," said the King. "We'll put him in the forefront of the battle. If it's necessary, we will get up a war for his special benefit. Never you fear, we'll dispose of Uriah."

"You—you don't leave one any breath," said the Countess, after a pause, panting a little.

"You shouldn't have such a mouth," complained his Majesty. "It's a—a living dare; and—well, I dare a good deal, you know."

The water purled and splashed in the green darkness behind them. Now and then a little puff of wind came in through the open windows beyond the fountain and stirred the long palm leaves and brought a cool fragrance of roses and mignonette. In the ballroom the orchestra was playing "Morgenblätter." The music came into the Winter garden faintly, mingled with the murmur of voices and the clink of sabres.

The King was watching the face of the Countess zu Ehrenstern. It held a curiously interesting expression. She smiled slightly, her eyes were very wide, and there was an unwonted light in them, a gleam of excitement.

"Would you dare a good deal?" she demanded, turning the excited eyes on her sovereign; "would you, sire?" She waved a comprehensive hand about her. "Then chuck it!" she said, simply.

The King drew a long breath and another and another.

"Good God!" he gasped, "do you mean it, Varvara? Do you mean it? Good God!"

The Tartar eyes gleamed in the half-darkness.

"Oh, I mean it, *mon Roi!*" she whispered. "I mean it! Think! no more papers to sign—no more troops to review—no more cornerstones to lay and speeches to make—no more sitting in a gold cage and looking hungrily through the bars at the blessed common world outside—no more form, ceremony, limitations, but the wide, wide world, *mon Roi*, with all it holds—the wide, wide world like a draught of wine—and me!"

She threw up her white arms restlessly, eagerly, as if she were about to take wing, and the Tartar eyes danced riotously.

"Heart of God, what a dare!" said the King, under his breath. "Soul of Mary, what a life!"

He took the face of the Countess between shaking palms and held it close to his. His eyes burned it.

"Would you do it?" he cried. "Are you brave enough, Varvara? Oh, yes, you'd run away with the King. Anybody would run away with the King; but think a bit. Out there, beyond the bars, I shouldn't be a king, you know, but just a common man—a man who wouldn't dare show his face too conspicuously. A common man, understand; not a king. Have you the courage for that, Varvara? Here you're glad enough to—to be favored by the King. Out there you'd be a runaway, with no one to envy you. Have you the nerve for that, my Tartar?"

She threw the white arms about his neck. Something moved and quivered inside him at their warm touch, and her face glowed in the dusk against his.

"Look at me!" said the Countess. "Do you see any doubt in me? Do you see any fear in me? They say you know women. Did you think I loved the King? Ah, Louis, Louis! my man, my big, fierce man! didn't you know it was you? No king, Louis; you, you!"

The King swung about and dropped his face into his hands. The muscles

of it twitched and played strange tricks.

"Let me think," he said; "give me a moment to think."

The world outside the gold bars smiled and beckoned. Sunshine, the odor of roses, Spring winds over the grass wakening the blood in the veins, and freedom, freedom! Great God, what freedom means to a caged soul!

Varvara's breath was on his cheeks. He felt the throb of her heart fast and strong against his arm. The smell of her hair was in his nostrils. The lift of her breathing, the perfume of her, the sway of her passion touched his blood, mounted to his head.

"Listen!" he said, swiftly. "There's a train leaves Freistadt, northbound, at 2.17 in the morning. It stops, on signal, at the Schloss private station down beyond the gardens half an hour later. Go home in an hour or so. The ball won't be over till three o'clock. Leave word for the Count that you aren't well; he'll stay till the end. Then meet me at the inner gate of the Italian garden, back of the Neptune fountains, at two o'clock. If anything turns up to keep me I'll send you word. Otherwise I will be there promptly at two. Bring a bag, but no servant, no maid."

He drew a long breath as one who has taken his plunge. His hands clasped and unclasped nervously.

"Uriah will have to stand it as best he can," he said, lightly. "As for me, I think no one will die of grief. My heaven! to be free—free! Charles will make a few philosophic remarks. Charles fancies himself at philosophy. The Chamber will meet and take solemn action. The papers will gloat—for a week. Elena will—Elena will—Elena—"

He broke off, frowning. "It's a damned low trick on Elena!" he said, slowly, as if to himself.

The Countess laughed shortly.

"Ah, the Queen will cry her eyes out," she said, with some asperity. "She adores you. I watched you dancing with her to-night. Good Lord, one might as well dance with

a dummy! She's an iceberg—a mediæval graystone saint—a—a—"

"I think," said the King, gently, "that we will leave the Queen out of it, if you don't mind, Varvara. She—she is the Queen, you know. Perhaps we haven't been quite ideal lovers. Perhaps it's been my fault. Perhaps—well, she will reign wisely. It's a damned low trick on Elena!" he concluded, slowly, as if to himself.

The Countess stirred uneasily in her seat and murmured something unintelligible. She felt that she had made a false step, had struck a wrong note.

Then one of the gentlemen-in-waiting appeared from the ballroom, making a discreet amount of noise as he approached.

"The Queen is asking for your Majesty," he said.

The King rose at once. "Two o'clock," he whispered, adding, aloud: "Von Altdorf, I must leave the Countess zu Ehrenstern in your care. I am treating you, on the whole, better than you deserve."

The Countess curtsied, and Von Altdorf bowed abjectly.

At the door of the royal private apartments the King and Queen dismissed their ladies- and gentlemen-in-waiting.

"Go back and amuse yourselves, *mes souris*," said his Majesty. "The cats are tactfully out of hearing. Night, Elena," he said at the Queen's suite. "Sweet dreams, though you won't have them after that *langouste mayonnaise*."

The Queen gave him her hand, and a little tired smile that followed him to his own rooms and stayed unpleasantly in his mind, while he packed a Gladstone bag and transacted certain business with a combination American safe built into the wall of his study.

He stood over the filled bag before closing it, and wondered how many indispensable articles had been omitted. He was unaccustomed to packing his own luggage.

"A flask," he said—"now where

the deuce is that silver filigree flask the Emperor gave me? I believe Elena has it."

He went out of the room and down the little passage that led to the Queen's chambers.

The door of her dressing-room stood open, there being no fear of intrusion, and let a bar of light out across the red carpet of the corridor.

He hesitated a moment, then looked in, diffidently. The Queen was entirely alone. She had been taking off the many jewels she had worn at the ball and laying them in a silver jewel casket that stood open on the table by her side. She was better without them. People said she was the most beautiful woman in the royal circles of Europe, not excepting the three Orléans sisters. She wore a close-fitting gown of white covered with silver and pearl embroidery. It clung to her gorgeous figure tenderly, making every perfection evident without vulgarizing it. Her head, with its crown of black hair, its sombre, perfect beauty, is as familiar in every corner of the world through the public prints and photographs as was that of the martyred Empress of Austria. Indeed, their types are strangely alike, as everyone knows.

Out in the corridor the King stirred uneasily, and wavered between entering and stealing back unseen to his own rooms. He felt rather like an eavesdropper, a Peeping Tom.

The Queen sang under her breath a snatch of song, a sad little, quaint little nursery ballad of old France. She looked tired, infinitely—not physically tired merely, but sad, unhappy.

To the King out in the corridor it came all at once how wonderfully, unspeakably beautiful his wife was, and how hopelessly apart they had lived during their two years of marriage. It came to him that she might have been lonely all this time, that her coldness, her aloofness, might have been cloaking a sad heart and an empty life.

"Ah, well," sighed the King, "I haven't been quite hilarious myself, but thank God it's over with. To

morrow life begins," and he knocked at the open door and entered.

"Looking for a flask, Elena," he apologized—"a silver-and-glass flask. It occurred to me that you borrowed it a week or so ago. Happen to have it in sight? Don't bother, you know."

The Queen looked about the room, on the tables and in some drawers.

"I remember very well borrowing it, Louis," she said, "and I'm sure it's about, but heaven knows where. Wait a moment—I'll call a maid."

"No, don't," said the King; "it isn't of any consequence, really. I must have a dozen of them about. I'll look one up."

He fingered the blazing diamonds in the jewel case absently.

"Did you—did you have a pleasant evening with the—Countess?" asked the Queen.

His Majesty looked up in surprise. There was a distinct bitterness in the tone. He had not believed that she cared enough to be bitter or even piqued.

"Oh, yes," he said, indifferently. "The Countess is a woman of some wit. She's a tongue in her head, really. Well—good-night. Never mind about the flask."

The Queen threw up a hand and turned her head. "Wait," she cried, softly. "Listen." The music from the ballroom below and in the far wing of the Schloss came up through the night, made very faint and sweet by distance.

"'Fleurs de l'Amour,'" breathed the Queen, with closed eyes and a little, tender smile at her lips, and a rosy, faltering blush of girlhood spreading upward. "'Fleurs de l'Amour!' Ah, Louis, do you remember?—they played it that evening at Homburg when you—you asked me to be a queen. It was a cold business, Louis, wasn't it?—and there haven't been many *fleurs de l'amour* in our lives. But a girl doesn't forget her proposals. Ah, well, good-night, Louis; sleep well."

She turned away wearily and sank into the big stuffed chair by the table. But the King lingered, still touching

the diamonds and sapphires in the jewel box.

Then suddenly he pushed over a little footstool to the side of the chair and dropped upon it. He twice opened his mouth to speak, and twice hesitated. Then all at once: "How beautiful you are, Elena!" he said, simply; "how wonderfully beautiful you are!" And the Queen turned suddenly crimson and hid her face.

"No," he went on, presently, "we haven't made a good thing of it, have we? We haven't seemed to hit it off at all. I wonder—I wonder if we've ever tried. It was—as you say—a cold business, from the first. One doesn't often marry for love in our rank, but I wonder—I wonder if we've ever really tried. Whose fault is it? I suppose we each would promptly confess to it." He laughed a little, mirthlessly. "But each would be thinking all the time that it is really the fault of the other."

He took one of her hands in both of his and stroked it thoughtfully. The touch of it gave him a curious, unexpected thrill. He looked up swiftly, with puzzled eyes.

"Am I crazy to-night?" he demanded of himself, scornfully. But the thrill refused to depart.

The Queen turned her face to him again, and the hand in his clasp stirred a little, tremulously.

"Fault?" she said, slowly. "I don't know, Louis. I honestly don't know. I suppose you thought I was hopelessly cold and unfeeling and aloof, and I suppose I thought you were hopelessly taken up with—with your other friends—countesses and the like—don't be angry, Louis—and hadn't time to give a thought to me—weren't you, Louis, weren't you? And then, too, my friend, there's something else, something that is hard for a man to realize, of course—the shock, the outraged sensibilities of a young girl thrown into a loveless marriage. You can't figure to yourself how such a girl feels, Louis; you mustn't blame her if she draws back into her shell in an agony of humiliation, of bitterness, of shame."

She turned about in the chair and leaned close over him, where he sat at her feet, and gave her other hand to his clasp. A wave of black hair, loosened when she had taken off her tiara, slipped down and fell across his face.

The thrill within him became a storm that shook him bodily, a vertigo that whirled the room before his eyes.

"Oh, man, man!" he groaned, inwardly, "*are* you mad? Why, man, fool, your bag is all packed in that room yonder, to run away with another woman to Paris; to freedom, man!—blessed, blessed, careless freedom, and with a woman who loves you!"

But all at once the blessed freedom seemed to him undesirable, rather silly. It came to him that he would be homesick after a little, sick for the Court, for the shooting in the Winter, for his friendly quarrels with Charles. He thought of the slant Tartar eyes and wicked mouth of the Countess zu Ehrenstern. Then he ventured a look upward into the beautiful face above him. His very flesh crept as if he had offered a shameful insult to the Queen in thinking of a comparison.

The filmy lace of the curtains at the open window swayed and wavered inward with the cool night breeze from the gardens, and on the breeze came again, faint and sweet, the old refrain from the ballroom:

Faith that liveth forever,
Rose, my rose, of love,
Hearts that will sever never,
Flowers, ah—

"I suppose you are right," said the King. "I suppose I never considered that part of it, never made allowance for what you might be feeling. It was such a matter of business! How should I understand, anyhow? You see, Elena, I've never loved anyone." Then, inwardly, "Great heaven! what is the matter with me? I want to kiss her hands! She'd die of the shock. *What* is the matter with me?"

"Never loved anyone!" she said. "Do you think I am a child, Louis? Do you think that the things you do

never reach my ears? Don't let us be absurd!"

"By all the saints, it's the truth!" he cried, standing over her. "I've never lied to you—and—and—whatever they may say," he went on, more diffidently, "I've never wronged you, either. On my soul, I've never loved any woman! Oh, of course, I don't mean that I've—I've never—well, I'm a human being—that I've never felt any sort of an emotion for my—my countesses, as you delicately put it just now, but bless you, I'd have felt the same interest in their maids if they had happened to be good-looking enough. If only one hadn't an absurd prejudice in favor of one's own class!"

He walked up and down the room with his hands clasped behind him and his brows lowering.

"I'm not well," he said to himself. "I've a strange desire to do all sorts of absurd things. My mind is weakening."

He dropped again to the little footstool at the Queen's feet and took her hands in his.

He wanted to tell her that he felt a curious trembling weakness coming on, and that he must be off to bed, but he looked into her face with a certain childlike wonder, a dawning surprise, and said only, "What wonderful eyes you have, Elena! what wonderful eyes!"

The eyes hid themselves swiftly, but the King found himself holding her two hands to his cheek. He realized his actions very dimly in the midst of the fever, the strange madness, the breaking up of heaven and earth that surged in him and would not be mastered.

"Tell me," he said, unsteadily, "have you ever loved anyone, Elena?"

"Yes!" cried the Queen, "great God, yes!" and she drew away from him and rose and stood at some little distance, hiding her face in her hands.

The fever and storm and whirl of things dropped away from him like a garment. He laid his throbbing head against the arm of the chair that she

had quitted. He did not know that his lips clung to the flowered silk, warm where her arm had lain.

"She loves someone else," he said to himself, very slowly, that he might realize what the fact meant to him. "She loves someone else, and she's sorry for me. She doesn't want to cause me pain. Now *I've* tried to save *her* pain in the last two years, haven't I? Ah, you brute, you low brute! She's the only thing in all the green earth, and I've thrown her away, thrown her away deliberately, for—countesses!"

The Tartar eyes and wicked mouth of Varvara zu Ehrenstern came before him again, and he shivered from head to foot.

"Dearest, dearest!" he breathed, softly, with his cheek against the flowered silk of the big chair, "I've been mad—blind—possessed of devils, but how I love you—how I must love you all my life long!"

A little sob from the woman across the room brought him to his feet.

"Then," said the King, very sadly, "I have lost you, as God knows I deserve. Be a little sorry for me, Elena, for, by my soul and body I love you so that I think I must die of my love!" and he dropped on one knee and kissed the hem of her skirt.

Then, when he would have left her, the Queen turned a white face to him.

"Oh, are you blind, Louis?" she breathed.



WHO CARES?

THE warm Wind kisses the Rose of May.
She turns not away, nor says him nay;
For buds will blow and winds must go.
If he comes not back, who'll know, who'll know
That she's lain caressed on the Wind's warm breast?
If he dares, who cares?

The bold Wave kisses the Lily's mouth,
Though she knows he is fleeing away to the South.
For buds will blow and streams must flow.
He will ne'er come back. Who'll know, who'll know
That she lay so fair on his bosom bare?
If he dares, who cares?

My love he kisses me while he may.
I turn not away, nor say him nay;
For lips will glow, and my love must go
As the Wind and Wave. Who'll know, who'll know
That I reeled with bliss 'neath my love's warm kiss?
If he dares, who cares?

HATTIE HORNER-LOUTHAN.



ACCOUNTED FOR

HE—Those two people in the far corner appear happy. Are they married?
HE—Yes, but not to each other.

THE GOSPEL OF GOLD

By Edgar Saltus

MONEY was recently tight—a very vulgar condition for it to be in, by the way, yet whether tight or loose, there is really nothing more fascinating. Though you haven't any, there is no law to prevent you from fancying that you are opulent, and, imagination aiding, you are afloat in seas of delight, on a steam yacht at that, surrounded by a picked corps of *demi-vierges* solely occupied in discovering the secret of your ceaseless ennui.

What more can the heart desire? The dream of it is even fairer than realization could be. *Demi-vierges* have their limitations, so, too, have steam yachts. The raptures of seas of delight, when prolonged, make you yawn the top of your head off. From which it follows, or seems to follow, that it is better to be indigent and imaginative than plutocratic and perverse. Even so, and even otherwise, the potentialities of plutocracy will suffer no diminution from the showing. A writer whose name we forget, and which, were we to remember, we should probably misspell, told, in the childhood of history, about a race of dwarfs who passed their lives fighting for gold with griffins in the dark. He told, too, or if he did not someone else did, about another set of people who lived on the scent of the rose. All this picturesqueness occurred a long time ago, and it may be never occurred at all. But an analogy subsists. We never enter the Street without encountering those dwarfs. We never withdraw into our *tour d'ivoire* that the rose-breathers are not there to greet us.

Personally, we prefer the latter.

They receive us with open alms. The delicacy of the largess is very inspiring. It entrances, evokes and does not exhaust. It takes you up through enchanted gardens and sets you down in a world beautiful, ornate, unutilitarian; a world that in lieu of hypocrisy and cant offers mysteries and myths, yet a world in which there are gullies of gold, gullies, too, of gore. For even in delicate largess these things are condimental. They form the sauce that we think we have heard described as piquant, the dash of red pepper without which even the truffle is trite.

The flavor aiding, you may pass with Paris on his scarlet prow over the green plain of waters, straight to the gates of Ilium, and within see how each man stood and mused at Helen's face, war in the war of the world that was waged for her, watch the topless towers burn, and then, if you like, after beholding the gore behold the gold—the blinding apparition that archaeology unearthed, the richest treasure that Death ever amassed, the unimagined splendor of the King of Kings.

Sights such as these any decent *tour d'ivoire* will provide. By way of accompaniment to the visions there is, or should be, a hum of harps swooning in a crash of brass, a finale and prelude in one. Then, as the drama faints back into silence, there should follow the whisper of waters, the lap of waves, the muffled voice of a river which, winding from hill to sea, is pierced suddenly by a note very high, very clear, entirely limpid, a note that has in it the gaiety of a sunbeam, a note that mounts in loops

of light, expanding as it mounts, transcending the sound of the waters, raining accords on the ripples, until, bursting into jets and fanfares, it drowns the voice of the river, shakes stars in your ears, sends a shiver down your spine and in cascades of harmony propels from the stream's deepest depth the sonority and glare of the *Rheingold*.

Follow that glare and the glitter of it backward and forward out of myth and into the market, and you will find that always and ever it has dazzled the eyes of man. Just why this should be we haven't an idea, unless, indeed, as someone somewhere surreptitiously surmised, it is because, given enough of the substance and you are qualified to tell anybody to go to hell. It may be objected that such telling, while obviously convenient, is not at all polite. Politeness, however, has been relegated to the department stores. Floor-walkers are models of perfect deportment. But elsewhere it is good form to be rude. In the smart set the best manner consists in having none, and how can that absence of manner be better enhanced than by airs of profound contempt? Such airs are not perhaps endearing; moreover, so many people there are who really deserve them that they should not be wastefully dispensed. Yet if you are rich enough you can readily be extravagant. You may cast them on the waters—they are not well bred, and you can be indifferent to their return.

How much it takes to do this becomingly depends on where one is. In New York, with a penny less than ten million you are pinched. The wolf is not at the door merely, he is in the drawing-room. You can't even afford to be entertained. In circumstances so straitened any airs would be sheer presumption. But in London, where life is more solemn, and bad taste less ornate, a million will suffice. It is rumored that there are bankrupts who have rioted on less. Yet this, possibly, was in the good old days. In any event, those days are gone. For that matter, the million-days are going, too. A decennium hence and a

million in Mayfair will represent what similar small change does here—a form of poverty that, while shabby, is not genteel.

In the good old days to which we have referred, and particularly in the bad young days that preceded them, things were different. Civilization was tolerably out at elbows. Pluto was known in the schools, but the plutocrat had not appeared in the streets. He had not even appeared in the dictionary. The evolution and the domestication of the animal have occurred within the last fifty years. We forget the amount that Dumas gave *Monte Cristo*, and it is too much bother to look it up. Yet however stunning the sum total may have seemed at the time, it would be the devil's own job to make both ends meet on it now. Any one of our self-respecting plutocrats could write it off and never know the difference.

We lack a list of these people, otherwise we should produce it. We lack, too, those statistics of wealth which prudent essayists first crib, then pigeonhole and finally hand out as their own. Otherwise we should do the same. What we can assert is that fifty years ago there were but two millionaires among us. To-day they are common as lords on Pall Mall. Personally we have not over a hundred or so on our visiting list, and half of these we do not know by sight. Yet if we may believe everything we read—and writing as we do, we are rather disinclined to—by actual count their number now exceeds ten thousand. Assuming, for the fun of it, that the figures are correct, then, should the multiplication of the breed continue in the same rabbit progression, one of two things is certain—either they will overrun us entirely or else we shall all be millionaires.

And why not? It does not require an inordinate intellect to be rich. On the contrary. All one has to do is to stand in the way. Somewhere near Sardis there was a stream. Its properties were such that those who bathed in it were enabled to turn whatever they touched into gold. That stream

has been diverted from Sardis to the Street. Bathing there is variously conducted. You may plunge or you may dabble. But the ensuing transmutation differs only in degree. Touch a block of five thousand A. O. T. common, and while, all things being relative, it may precipitate more dust than a hundred preferred, yet such is the beauty of the chemistry of the bath that in either case the residuum is coin. We used to think that spook séances and spirit manifestations were nursery tricks beside the thaumaturgy with which a prestidigitator of the pen could turn a wad of foolscap and a bottle of ink into a bank account, but that sorcery, however surprising, is stupid beside the celerity with which any old thing can be resolved from a tip into cash.

The Gospel of Gold is, then, quite simple. It has a defect, however—it is yet unwritten. When it does appear, if it ever should, *Aie de quoi et Dieu t'aidera* will be its obvious motto. Therein are all the law and some of the profits. *Quoi*, of course, stands for coin. The rest of the apothegm, diversely expounded by scholiasts, the higher criticism construes into an invitation to make haste, not so much perhaps while the sun shines as when the bull does. Last month the hide of the brute was a golden fleece. The month before the sheen of it coruscated. The month previous every hair emitted sparks. Next month it may be more brilliant than ever. The month after there may be no looking at it at all. For a year, for a year and a day, perhaps for a year and a half, round the ring that bull will gyrate, illuminating in his *écart*s everything he meets. Then suddenly the great *espada*, whose name is Time, with one swift thrust will transfix him. Such is the fate of bulls.

Such at least has been their fate at every function that the last century has witnessed. The *corridas* of the Street don't differ much from those of Spain. In each case the spectacle is the same. It is the climax that varies. There the ring is swept by a supe,

here it is struck by a crisis. The orbit of that crisis the astrologists of political economy figure at about ten years. The oscillation of its forces is as calculable and as inevitable as a comet's return. Between depression and prosperity the pendulum swings. In the financial history of financial nations fat years are followed by lean, and lean by fat. We are having our fat now. It is not yet in the fire, but just as surely as two and two make four it will get there. The moment markets become unable to absorb further produce, money proceeds to get tight, there is a rush to unload, a precipitate drop, and before you can get from under, the *espada* appears, the bull is dead, and the lights are extinguished.

These phenomena, which, with a regularity that we cannot but admire, have decennially spaced a century, will presumably recur a twelvemonth hence. They may come a little earlier or a little later, but they can no more desert the heavens of political economy than stars can deviate from their course. If now these premises are accepted it follows that the epigraph on the unwritten gospel has its weight. Assuming its observance, assuming that haste has been made while the bull, though ragged, perhaps, was still in the ring, what is to be done with the profits?

Mr. Carnegie not long since recommended their immediate distribution. He recommended that the masses be supplied with libraries, galleries, churches and parks. The pseudo-benevolence of the idea is revolting. The masses don't want these things. They care nothing for parks that don't provide, for art that doesn't appeal, for books that only bewilder, or for churches that no longer console. What they want is not soft solder, but socialism. In default of the latter, then, if only for the pleasurable emotions that the circus provides, they want the spectacle of rich men living richly.

The desire is entirely righteous. It is one that deserves to be fostered. The splendor of billionaires should be

manifest in successions of fastidious festivals, in Heliogabalian luxury, in super-Neronian magnificence and in Vesuvii of coin. The press may rail and the pulpit fulminate. Yet what if they do? It is only through general gorgeousness, ceaseless extravagance, unreckoning lavishness and royal profusion that man can in any way approach the ideal which Nature, in her divine prodigalities, herself has set. But our plutocrats don't look at it in that light. The day is not distant when the giving of automobiles and grand pianos by way of cotillon favors will satisfy, and amply, their conceptions of what's what. Meanwhile, we are quite convinced that they have plenty of taste, but from samples exhibited we are quite convinced, too, that it is all very bad.

A condition of things such as this cries, if not to heaven, at least to us all. It is a matter that narrowly escapes being personal. Many of us are, it is true, no better off than the law allows. But what of it? Though we live on a hundred dollars a day we can always dream of a billion. Then, too, in a land so full of surprises as this is, nobody—except a few mediums like Mrs. Piper and a few astrologers like ourselves—nobody can tell what spoiled old men of Fortune the poorest of us may yet become. Hence, therefore, to the pilgrim as well as to the plutocrat the need of a Gospel of Gold.

Without seeming to know more than we do, we can safely affirm

that one of these days such an evangel will appear. Its production, however, will not be easy. It will require the quadruple collaboration of a profound philosopher, an inspired composer, a thorough mathematician and an impeccable poet. Could Plato, Wagner, Euclid and Hugo call to one another across the centuries, they would be the ones for the job.

From their combined banquets, scores, logarithms and verses the precepts evolved might lead even Mr. Carnegie from the error of his ways. Failing that—for some things are impossible—the generated maxims would form a manual that ought to prove highly serviceable in the education of billionaires-to-be. It would be a code for the plunger and the plutocrat. It would teach how to get riches and how to get rid of them. It would set forth the rites of the inimitable life, the secrets of triumphant death. It would explain the subtle science of splendor and the more difficult art of entertaining people you never saw before. It would show dwarfs how to fight, bring fresh dreams to rose-breathers, outsell the stupidest novel, fill a long-felt want, and be a very handy book to have about the house.

There is but one thing it could not do, and that is, supply brains to those who have none. But it would be a holy writ, the annotation of a psalm that the whole nation is singing, a paean in praise of the greatness and glory of the god that is Gold.



CELESTIAL COMMERCE

COMMUNICATION with the stars
Is now anticipated,
With Venus, Jupiter and Mars,
So scientists have stated.

Free trading won't be far behind;
In time we'll choose a pattern,
And looking at the back we'll find
It labeled, "Made in Saturn."

AT THE SIGN OF THE CLEFT HEART

By Theodosia Garrison

TIME—afternoon. The season—May.
The scene—Love's Shop, Arcadian Way;
Love at the counter; Maiden at the door.

MAIDEN

Is this the place?—I've not—been here—before—

LOVE (*aside*)

Ah, a new customer—I know the blush—
Poor child! She's all a-quiver as a thrush
Thrills before singing. (*Bowing*) Sweetheart, from your face
I can assure you that this *is* the place,
The Sign of the Cleft Heart. Hearts, old and new,
Always in stock; repairing done here, too.
Exchanges made and offered—

MAIDEN

Nay, sir, I

Have only come—

LOVE (*aside*)

That blush again!

MAIDEN

—to buy.

LOVE

Good! Look about you. Here are hearts a score—
Choose any one—

MAIDEN

Think you I wanted more?
One's almost too expensive. Mother prayed—

LOVE (*aside*)

Venus! these mothers—how they help the trade!

MAIDEN

—Prayed me—to—be content a year or two
With none—or let her choose for me.

LOVE

Yet you—

MAIDEN

I came alone, because I thought that she—
That I—in fact, our tastes might not agree.

LOVE

Quite so. In fact, when ancient ladies call
I often find their tastes the worst of all;
And yet they're suited easily, but you—
You youngsters puzzle me. (*Picking up a heart*) Will this one do?

MAIDEN (*reflecting*)

Um! yes; it's large, but then it seems so green.

LOVE

Yes, it is fresh, but then it's just nineteen
And full of poetry. Why, it could speak
An hour about the dimples in your cheek.
And then how pure it is!—no spot, no stain—

MAIDEN

Uninteresting! Put it back again.

LOVE (*aside*)

So *that* to girlhood is what boy love means!
I'll put this by for someone beyond—teens.
Well, look at this one.

MAIDEN

Oh, but that's so small!

LOVE

And yet so heavy. Quick, don't let it fall!

MAIDEN

So small, yet heavy that I scarce can hold—

LOVE

It's brimmed quite to the very top with gold.
No romance left; no touch of hope or fire,
But hard, bright gold.

MAIDEN

It's not what I desire,
The horrid, heavy thing, yet—

LOVE

Be confessed.

MAIDEN

I think mamma would have me like it best.

LOVE

It's not for sale; it's left for an exchange.

MAIDEN

For what?

LOVE

A tender, maiden heart.

MAIDEN

How strange!

LOVE

Not strange at all—exchange of pounds and pence
 For youth and purity and innocence.
 The thing's done every day.

MAIDEN

But you—but *you*—?

LOVE

Not strictly in my line, you mean. Quite true—
 A side branch of the trade, not really mine;
 It only bears my signature and sign,
 And they wear off. But see, will this one do?

MAIDEN

Why, Love, how *can* you? Look, it's broken through!

LOVE

Of course, of course; yet, if you really cared
 To have the thing, it's easily repaired,
 And no one's wiser. Treat it thus and so
 And in a month the crack will scarcely show.

MAIDEN

But still I'd know it.

LOVE

True, but think what wit
 And cleverness you'd show in mending it!

MAIDEN

Well, I'll consider that; but this one, see!
 So nicked and cracked—

LOVE

Oh, handle carefully!
 It's fragile, but in good condition.

MAIDEN

True,
 Yet I prefer the one that's broken through
 To this one, with its horrid, hundred cracks.

LOVE (*aside*)

There spake the woman! This one, then; this lacks
 Nothing to make it what you most desire.
 A perfect article, complete, entire.

THE SMART SET

MAIDEN

But it looks shopworn.

LOVE

Well, the fact appears
It's been for sale for something like ten years.

MAIDEN

Ugh! No, a thing like that would never do.
I want a heart—that—others covet, too.
Now let me see—is not this one—

LOVE

That's black
In certain lights, and damaged. Put it back;
It's not the thing you're looking for at all.
Now this one—

MAIDEN

That's too cold.

LOVE

And this?

MAIDEN

Too small.

LOVE

Well, really, I have nothing else to show.
You might stop in to-morrow, say—

MAIDEN

Oh! oh!

Look there!

LOVE

Look where?

MAIDEN

Why, there, upon the shelf!
The very thing—I'll take it down myself—
Indeed, the nicest one you have in store!

LOVE

That's not for sale.

MAIDEN

Oh, get it, I implore!
I'll give you anything you ask—and more.

LOVE

It's not for sale. I'm storing it, that's all,
Until that day a certain maid shall call
And claim it.

MAIDEN

Was't not I?

LOVE

No, no, my dear,
The owner's last instructions were too clear.

MAIDEN

Alas, what were they?

LOVE

"Take this heart," he said,
"And put it by with hearts uncomforted.
Show it to none, until a maid one day
Comes searching for a heart she threw away.
Then take this down, and if it be the same,
Across and through it will be writ her name."

MAIDEN

Alas, what more?

LOVE

He said, "Her eyes are blue——"

MAIDEN

And mine are brown—but would not brown eyes do?

LOVE

He said, "Her hair is golden as the track
Of sunshine on the sea."

MAIDEN

And mine is black!

But she has never come?

LOVE

Not yet.

MAIDEN

Then oh,
Give me the heart! I want it, want it so!
Dear Love, give me the heart.

LOVE

I should not dare.

MAIDEN

She has forgotten it—she would not care.
Give it to me——

LOVE

It is not meant for you.
Here are so many others—won't they do?
Take two or three——

MAIDEN

I only want that one!

LOVE

Really, I'm sorry, but it can't be done.

MAIDEN (*in tears*)

Please, Love, oh, please, oh, cruel—

LOVE

No—no—no!

MAIDEN

You horrid, horrid, cruel thing! I'll go
Straight home and tell my mother. What is more,
I'll *have* that one!

LOVE (*solus*)

Whew! How she slammed the door!
And how she begged! Poor child, she'll know some day
The tricks Love plays to make the business pay.
Why, bless me, look at this—a happy find!
Poor little soul, she's left her heart behind
Instead of taking one away. Dear, dear!
Give me the steps and let me store it here
Close by the other—so, beneath the rose—
And when she comes to-morrow—well, who knows?



SO WAGS THE WORLD

MADGE—I had a most delightful time at the piano recital this afternoon.
MARJORIE—How lucky you are to have a father who can give you
money all the time for tickets. The overture must have been beautiful.

MADGE—I don't quite recollect, but the pianist's hair was just lovely.
He must spend more time on it than on his practicing.

MARJORIE—How was the sonata?

MADGE—I guess that was all right, but I was in dreamland all the time,
for I knew mine was the prettiest gown in the whole audience.

MARJORIE—Do you honestly think, my dear, that you derived any real
benefit from the recital?

MADGE—I'm sure of it, love. All the music in my nature seemed to be
aroused by the young artist's skilful rendition, and the moment I arrived
home I sat down to my piano and played a whole lot of those lovely ragtime
coon melodies.



MEAGRE MATERIAL

EDITOR—Why don't you write something about bathing suits?
JOKER—Nothing much to write about.

IN A LONDON SEASON

By Edgar Fawcett

THEY had taken a small house in Upper Grosvenor street for the season, and now it was the middle of June. London had never been gayer. Two European royalties had come to visit Queen Victoria, and hence the Drawing Rooms had proved specially brilliant, and many of the private balls as well. Never was there more jollity at the clubs in St. James's street and Pall Mall; never were there more luxurious dinners in Park Lane and the big patrician squares. Through the soft nights and the opaline pallor of the early dawns cabs dashed through Mayfair and Belgravia, bearing young men with glassy eyes and tousled white neckties—bearing other human freight not seldom, on whom the stains of revel were still more ruefully stamped.

Mrs. Dennistoun's small house in Upper Grosvenor street had been very expensive, and the gowns, the brougham, the landau, the hire of servants, the festal profferings, had all proved costly addenda. Just after the Ascot races, at which the wonderful beauty of her niece, abetted by certain specially choice habiliments, had set the society journals in raptures, Mrs. Dennistoun began to lose something of her brave and serene bearing. In public she still preserved a smiling front; but the girl who was her constant companion saw the change with silent apprehension.

"We *must* stay here till the first of August," Mrs. Dennistoun said, one morning at breakfast, when she and her young kinswoman were alone together; "but really, Rosamond, I'm getting horribly into debt. There's

no use feigning and falsifying any longer. I'm sorry we ever left Lynwood, now." The speaker pursed her lips and drearily shook her head, on which the blanched hair was modishly coiled and twisted. "And you, perhaps, can't but feel a sense of triumph at my remorse."

Lady Rosamond Garthe looked plaintively reproachful. "Triumph, Aunt Meta? That isn't like me. Come, now, grant it."

"I do, I do, Rose." Mrs. Dennistoun's eyes moistened behind their glasses, and tremors crept into her sharp, faded chin. "But you did so want to stay on at dull old Lynwood! You wanted it because Ashburnham Leigh was there. Ah, don't deny it!"

"I haven't denied it," said her niece, with voice lowered, yet firm, "and I shall not now. But there were other reasons, aunt. I knew you conceived the idea that a few weeks of all this hollow pomp would make me forget Ashburnham. I hated that you should drag big sums out of your income to effect an alienation impossible for both of us. Since I was eighteen Ashburnham and I have been in love with each other. How often have I told you that I should never marry anyone else? How often has *he* told you of his fixed fidelity? He is only a poor painter—and with little real talent—or so he's modest enough to maintain." Here Lady Rosamond left her place at table, having finished her breakfast, and began to roam vaguely about the room. "You *should* have seen it all, aunt," she went on, pausing at Mrs. Dennistoun's side. "None of these new

men interests me. I am always thinking of *him*. I am always thinking about the chance of our marriage. When he passed through London recently on his way southward, and brought with him good news concerning his lawsuit, I was tempted to tell you I would go nowhere if he, too, could not be given a card."

"Oh, he got his cards quickly enough. If I didn't supply them some of his aunts or cousins did. He's a poor artist—poor in more senses than one, *I* think—and lives down in the country. But he's Ashburnham Leigh, notwithstanding, and everybody realizes it, and there you two were, going about to places with your heads together and no eyes for any living mortal except yourselves. Of course it was horribly dispiriting for the men who've made up to you, Rosamond. I saw the Marquis of Roscommon frown with rage when you gave some question of his a monosyllable and went along tugging devotedly at Ashburnham's arm through Lady Laddismeere's great crush. And as for Stayne Dolmar, you treated him, at Mrs. Doneraile's musical, as if he were a waiter poking an ice at you that you didn't want."

Lady Rosamond recoiled a little, while she raised one protesting hand. "Stayne Dolmar, aunt! He's too odious to think of!"

Mrs. Dennistoun gave several quick, short nods. She had been fiercely irritated for days past; still, she detested losing her temper, as if it were some precious family heirloom. She had always been a woman of kind heart and high principles. But ever since her niece, a penniless little orphan, daughter of an impoverished peer whose title had gone to a rather distant cousin, had come to dwell with her at Lynwood, an ambition of strengthening ardor had possessed her. She cared nothing for the smart world herself; she had seen it all years ago. She was quite content to meet the end of her widowed days in her pretty and commodious Norfolkshire home. But Rosamond! ah, that was a different affair. Such a girl

was meant for a great marriage. As time passed on the amazing beauty of her niece became a perpetual spur and challenge. She must be taken up to London; they would see her there and fall at her feet. One doesn't put a tea rose into an earthen jug; yet what else could this Ashburnham Leigh hope to do? Admitting that a real passion existed between the pair, circumstance could dissipate it, on the side of the girl. She was wrought to be a duchess, or at least the wife of some conspicuous millionaire. Her father had been the twelfth Earl of Dundagil, and she, though dowerless, had a face and form that elicited literal wonder from observers.

"She must go! she must go!" Mrs. Dennistoun had mused again and again. "If I bankrupt myself she will pay me back, set me straight again—*afterward*." Her will had finally prevailed, and now she felt that she had indeed bankrupted herself. And for what? To find that her Rosamond had remained marble to the admiration and adoration poured upon her by her many suitors. Half the picture shops of London had flaunted her photographs in their windows. Famous portrait painters had begged the privilege of copying on canvas her angelic face. She was above the jealousy of women; they bowed before her loveliness as before a divine right. One of the handsomest *grandes dames* in England had whispered to her, "You make me hate to look in my looking-glass." She had refused the conceited but clever young Duke of Benvoirloch, who had already fled to Homburg in wrath, and as well all the others, lower in rank but richer, some of them, than even the infuriated Duke.

It was hard, savagely hard, and Mrs. Dennistoun, who had been for a good while thinking it so with well-drilled nerves and a collected outer deportment, now unleashed the dogs of war. She trembled in her chair as she next spoke, and her wan cheeks were in dismal accordance with the husky staccato of her tones.

"Too odious to think of, eh? I

believe he's the last you have left, now. You've alienated everybody but him. Oh, he's vulgar, perhaps, but he goes to Court, and the Prince and the Princess both beam on him. He's a beefy, florid creature, if you please, and sometimes he drops an h when he isn't very careful. But tell me the girl who wouldn't be his wife if he asked her! You wouldn't? You're quite alone, however. He worships you. As Lady Rosamond Dolmar you would have command of actually monstrous wealth. Some folk say that he's worth ten millions of pounds—including his South African mining shares and his Brazilian diamond mines. This may not be true; but no man with the faintest knowledge of financial matters will deny that he has four million pounds under his thumb. And you prate about Ashburnham Leigh's lawsuit! His claim to those Devonshire lands and moneys may be just enough, and his lawyer friend, Conover, out of pure friendship may be pushing it all he can. But he'll never get there—never! The Langley-Leighs are too strong for him, and there's that fatal flaw—the alleged, if unproved, illegitimacy of his great-grandfather, Dynevor Leigh. You can't say, Rosamond, that I've acted except for your good. You won't marry Ashburnham as he is, nor does he desire it, seeing the folly of such a marriage. Every penny of my dower estate, Lynwood, goes at my death to the Leicestershire Dennistouns; you have known that for an age. I've only the life income, and this I've been frightfully over-spending. You have been the apple of my eye, Rosamond, and now you've turned out a curse to me!"

Never had the girl seen her aunt so angered. She stared at Mrs. Dennistoun with hands tight clasped, her luminous gaze a tragedy of regret. Suddenly she hurried to the side of her interlocutress, and sought to take her hand. But she was almost flung away. Mrs. Dennistoun rose and tossed the glasses from her eyes. Flurriedly she sought a corner of the mantel, and there, with her brow

leaning against it, gave way to her emotions.

"A curse to you?" faltered Lady Rosamond. "How can you speak so heartless a sentence?"

Mrs. Dennistoun swept round, facing her. The girl looked so spiritually beautiful in her sorrow that for a second her companion felt abashed, even awed. But more bitter words found vent.

"You are fearfully ungrateful. You may live yet to repent the superb chances you have cast away. What does Ashburnham love you for? Your beauty—nothing else. It's maddened him, as it maddens half the men you meet. But wait till it fades. It *will* fade! Your mother was handsome when young; at thirty the change came. Ashburnham is fine looking, strong and athletic; with his birth and name he can marry an heiress any time between now and forty. Will *you* be like this at forty? What is your future? I shall have died, most probably—none of us L'Estranges live to be very old—and have left you the merest pittance. You'll be driven to marrying some inane curate or a captain on half-pay, or a City man from the Stock Exchange who hungers for a titled spouse."

Lady Rosamond bit her lips; into the depths of her sweet eyes pain had entered, and rebellion as well.

"What is this Stayne Dolmar, pray, but a City man from the Stock Exchange?"

Mrs. Dennistoun laughed gratingly. "He's that—oh, yes; but how much more? A giant of finance, if you please—a giant who's got me in his grasp, and all because of your wayward, unmerciful actions. Oh, look shocked, my dear, now when it's too late—now when this man whom you despise so loftily can fling us both into the gutter if he chooses!"

Anger bred anger in the listener. Lady Rosamond tossed her head, coloring, and hurried haughtily to the door; then paused, turned and measured her aunt scathingly from head to foot.

"If such things are really true they

reflect shame on yourself and make *me* wish I were dead. To borrow of that man! You deserve—" but here the girl checked herself. Her indignation had already cooled, grief supplanting it. "Oh, why did you not tell me when things began to threaten? We could have gone back to Lynwood—fled there, and economized, and struggled against debt!" She lifted both hands bewilderedly to her temples. "But wait; I'll see Stayne Dolmar this afternoon, if he comes, and he's sure to come. I'll induce him to give you time. He can't push matters—a man with all that money. He would never dream of doing anything horrible; he couldn't afford it."

"He will push matters," Mrs. Dennistoun said, calmed by the agitation she had roused. "It will be his revenge. He is that sort. It won't be revenge against me; it will be revenge against you *through* me. There's no use of your entreating him this afternoon. It will not serve; I know him to the marrow of his bones. He means only one course. Tell him that you'll be his wife, Rosamond, and he'll give me twenty years in which to pay it back."

Her niece shuddered. Then, stammeringly: "What—what is the sum? Is—it—very large?"

Mrs. Dennistoun named it, with a sullen curttness.

"Good heavens, Aunt Meta! So much! How *could* you?" She grasped the doorknob and quickly went out into the hall. As she was passing up stairs Mrs. Dennistoun followed her. She spoke across the bannister.

"Rose, Rose!" she appealed, "what will you say to him?"

"Anything, anything!" came the soft yet wild answer, "except *that*. No, no; never *that*!"

In the afternoon Stayne Dolmar appeared. There was the usual protracted serving of tea by two dapper footmen to a prattling throng. Women in picture hats and superfine draperies floated through the rooms or lounged in them. Men old and young, frock-coated, wondrous-waist-

coated, lilac-gloved, with beflowered buttonholes and Bond street neckties, flirted and loafed and sauntered, as their whims induced. There was a slight sprinkling of minor clergymen, a canon and a fat, pink-cheeked bishop. Eyes were incessantly turned toward Lady Rosamond. Three or four men were always gathered about her. She was never very talkative; English girls are somehow not required to be, and when, as in her case, they are surpassingly beautiful, devotees often regard their lapses into complete silence as an added charm. But no matter how many courtiers paid homage, Stayne Dolmar, tall, heavy, with his little eyes and huge nose set in a spacious, rubicund face, nearly always kept watch a few yards off. Now he stared at a photograph, now fumbled with the pages of a picture book, now vigorously polished an eyeglass, now played with a flossy spaniel or fed it biscuits. But he always kept watch.

After a while it happened that a Royal Person was driven up to the door in a modest brougham. When he entered everybody rose, and Mrs. Dennistoun made a deep curtsey. Presently he sat down beside Lady Rosamond, and laughed and chatted with her in the most ordinary way. All the worshippers retired respectfully, leaving the pair alone. Even Stayne Dolmar had to retire, but he kept watch, nevertheless, till the Royal Person looked at his watch, quitted his chair, cordially shook hands with his hostess's niece, and then moved forward among the guests, uttering pleasant words in his most gracious manner.

"I'm glad he's gone," whispered one lady to another, after he had taken leave. "The Royalties, when they pop in like that, do oppress one so!"

"Did you ever *hear* of such a belle as Rosamond Garthe?" returned the other lady. "But what an idiot she has been! It's that Ashburnham Leigh, you know—she's refused all of them for him! And they're both paupers. Romantic enough, but how foolhardy! Now she's nobody left

except Stayne Dolmar. And, do you know, they say he'll get her yet. He's inflexible; he won't give her up. I hear that he told Lady Clavisham . . ." And then, as Mrs. Dennistoun approached, the gossiping tongue grew silent.

When the long, sweet English twilight fell everybody had disappeared; everybody, that is, except Mr. Dolmar, in his pervasive burliness and redness. He remained, having come back into the rooms after seeing a certain lady of very high station to her carriage. Mrs. Dennistoun stood near the doorway. He glanced at her and then peered about the empty rooms.

"Where has she gone?" he asked.

"Rosamond? I don't know. Up stairs, most probably. She supposed, no doubt, that you'd come back."

He started. "Oh, it's like that, is it?"

"Yes," came the low and dogged answer. "It's like that. It will always be. There's no use. I did my best this morning. I told her about—the money. She doesn't believe you'll expose me. But if you do, it will not matter. She's invincible, impregnable. You might as well give it up and do your worst. She'll never marry you, Dolmar."

He nodded, and said, stolidly, as if to himself, "Won't she?" Then he put one of his big, chubby hands on Mrs. Dennistoun's arm. "Listen . . . Oh, shake my hand away, if you like, but listen."

After that he spoke on for some time with his voice in his throat. Suddenly his auditor gave a slight scream. She lifted a finger to either ear. "Oh, no, no! It's too horrible! I refuse to permit it. Besides, the scandal!"

"What scandal?" he scoffed. Huddling his bulky shoulders together, he gave a smile that showed his large white teeth, irregular, like a dog's. How Mrs. Dennistoun hated that smile! To her it was ursine. "We should be married. She would have gone to my house in Ruthven Gate and—married me. Before evening

I should have managed that our union be known at ten of the best clubs and as many private houses. Marriage covers a multitude of tattlings. I was hastily summoned to Scotland, the report would run; your niece consented to accompany me there as my wife. I am phrasing all this," he continued, "in the past tense. That's because of your veto. Well, so be it. You've signed those two bills. One will be due on the first of July. Don't imagine I'll spare you. Lady Rosamond is quite wrong; I will not. A few years ago I might have done so; but then my position was insecure—now it is firm."

"But your proposal! Monstrous!" flashed Mrs. Dennistoun. "You say you'll drag me into the courts. Well, drag me there. I'll tell them how you tried to bribe me into betraying my poor Rose!"

He laughed. "No, you won't. You'll not be permitted. It will not concern the case—a purely mercenary suit. My lawyer will hush you up before you've said three words. What you *can* do, if you please, is to cry this little interview from the house-tops. But I shall deny, deny. In the end what will happen? You will go back to Lynwood with a good deal of lost caste. I shall remain in town—give great dinners and make the smart folk more indebted to me in many ways—a few of them are indebted to me in uglier ways, by-the-bye, than you are—and gradually get it believed that you are a kind of semi-lunatic, whom rage at my perfectly natural law measures drove to circulate silly slanders. . . . Think it all over quite calmly. Remember, I don't ask very much. And whether the plan fails or succeeds you shall have both your notes back, with a loan of fifteen hundred pounds—if you care to consider it a loan—by the aid of which you can comfortably ravel out your rather tangled affairs during the next three or four years. . . . Good-evening, and pray write me some sort of answer. To-night, if you please. Anything sent between now and midnight to the Carlton

Club in Pall Mall will be sure to find me."

At this very moment Lady Rosamond was deep in a letter, written with hasty and passionate eagerness, to her lover in the South of England. "I have been tortured this afternoon by the necessity of seeing people," ran one of her sentences. Again: "But I am helpless, and must endure the whole crushing ordeal for a fortnight longer. Oh, dearest, that I should write you so amazing and grievous a letter as I know this will prove! Never did I so wish, for both our sakes, that your lawsuit might end in victory! I felt deeply encouraged when I read your words of hope this morning and your warm eulogies of Mr. Condover's legal abilities. The suit, you tell me, nears its close, and Condover is fighting for you in tremendous earnest! Oh, my love, how I envy him! If I could serve you like that! But I can only love you with all my soul and pray for your success. You deserve just such a friend. And ah, in your trouble and suspense, down there among those wrangling lawyers, you should not be distressed by the shocking news I am forced to send. This morning, a little while after your letter came, Aunt Meta exploded before me a bombshell of positive horror. . . ." And then the girl told what that horror had been, and disclosed all her dread and dislike of the man who had now dared to pose as would-be *Shylock* in so hideous a bargain. On second thought, however, she tore up this final page, fearing that Ashburnham's fury might drive him to some rash step, and merely mentioned the desolating fact that Dolmar held her aunt in his probably merciless power.

She placed a stamp on the envelope of her letter and slipped out of doors in the pearly June twilight. A red letter box stood not far away, and she dropped the letter into it with her own hands. It was sad to distrust or suspect her aunt, but the last few hours had been so fraught with jar and shock that she seemed to see Mrs. Dennistoun's image in new, re-

pelling outlines. Gladly would the girl even now have forgiven her everything. But as four or five days passed she revealed no sign that either her niece's pardon or censure was in the least a matter of concern. Barriers, dense yet impalpable, had risen between them. They spoke to each other, yet somehow with only the tips of their lips. They went out into the world together, ate together, bade each other good-night or good-morning, and yet, in point of actual mental nearness, felt hundreds of miles apart.

With Lady Rosamond this preoccupation was perhaps caused by hopeful news from her lover. He had replied with the most scornful comments on Mrs. Dennistoun's course, and had finished by assuring his sweetheart that the future seemed constantly to yield brighter perspectives, and that she might now be prepared any day to hear of how the Devonshire heritage had fallen to the rightful heir.

Of her longing and anxiety she told her aunt nothing. Nevertheless, it was not in the girl's nature to sulk or to cherish resentment. Day after day she met Stayne Dolmar at various functions, and coldly ignored him. She was so much of a reigning power that some male arm was always within reach by which she could escape his detested presence. As for Mrs. Dennistoun, the girl was always expecting her to speak out. At the faintest signal of remorse she would have thrown her arms about her aunt and let love reassert itself—the love that fright and disgust had been futile to kill. But her aunt gave no such signal. Was it possible that she did not repent her uncanny and ruthless overtures? The wild folly of having plunged herself into debt was something, after all, to pity her for. But the blood-curdling suggestion of a marriage with Dolmar! That, during certain intervals, made Lady Rosamond almost doubt the sanity of her old protectress and friend.

One morning she said, quite genially: "To-day, aunt, is Gertrude

Olmstead's garden party at Hampstead. It looks cloudy and uninviting, but I promised her I would go, and I've really grown very fond of her since we first met. It will be a long drive this unpleasant day, however, will it not?"

"I sha'n't go," said Mrs. Dennistoun, with mild decision. "I did not sleep well last night, and I've a touch of rheumatism in my left arm and shoulder. But, of course, you'll not stay away on this account. If you prefer not to drive, take your maid and go by train. It will be much quicker, and the Olmsteads are only a short walk from Finchley Road station."

She felt sure that her niece would assent to this plan, and she was not mistaken. Lady Rosamond left the house with her maid, Atchinson, at about four o'clock that afternoon. When she had gone Mrs. Dennistoun locked herself in her bedroom and stayed there for some time, tearless, rigid, suffering intensest torment. At last she felt as if another moment of inactivity would drive her mad. Soon afterward she donned a street costume and went dazedly out of doors. Behind her veil she now kept saying:

"I cannot do it—I dare not do it! I dare not—I cannot!"

She realized that the dire thing must be done quickly or not at all, and sheer terror made her limbs feel so weak that she grew doubtful if they would support her. In Oxford street she found a tea house, entered it and seated herself at one of its obscurest rear tables. Then, before the tea was brought, she drew forth a letter. The envelope bore the name of her niece and the Upper Grosvenor street address. Both superscription and contents were in her own handwriting, and both were penciled, as if with extreme haste. For at least the twentieth time she read her own composition:

Ruthven Gate, Thursday.

MY DEAR ROSE:

A wretched accident has befallen me. I thought to walk away my headache

this afternoon in the Park. As I was crossing the street just in this region, I saw a cab at full speed hurrying toward me. I made a dash to reach the curb, but as I gained it fell to the sidewalk, with one ankle turned beneath me. I suffered greatly, and of course there was a crowd. Seeing Stayne Dolmar's huge house so near at hand, I begged to be taken there. He was not in and has not yet returned, but the servants, two or three of whom recognized me, are doing the best they can. I hope you will come as soon as you return from Hampstead and receive this. We can then consult how I am to be got away before night; for go back home I of course must, and yet I am in too much pain just now to think at all clearly. Pray bring no servant. There's a legion of them here.

YOUR AUNT META.

She replaced the letter in the envelope and sealed it. When the maid came with her tea she asked if a messenger boy could be procured. The maid answered "yes," and went away. Mrs. Dennistoun looked at her watch. There was plenty of time before her niece would reach Upper Grosvenor street. She swallowed some of the hot tea and felt stronger, steadier-nerved.

After all, this man who had her in his power was a hundredfold more to blame than she. And if everything failed he would not dare to expose her. Nor would he dare to do more than terrorize Rosamond. Should he attempt to force a marriage on the girl his so-called "position" would be shattered to atoms, and a million times more than the lucre that he already possessed would not save him from the scorn of his countrymen. Rosamond, of course, would never forgive her for the part she had played. Even if she became, through fright, the wife of Dolmar it must always be the same. She would never bring disgrace on her husband's co-plotter, but at the price of her unceasing resentment this agent must buy freedom from public shame.

When the messenger arrived Mrs. Dennistoun gave him the letter and paid him the required charge. Later

she passed placidly from the restaurant and repaired to the Park. It was a gloomy and chilly day, always threatening rain, yet never achieving more than a few surly drops. From the Marble Arch she strolled to that portion of the Park whence she could command a good view of Upper Grosvenor street for several hundreds of yards. Thus she saw her own stoop perfectly, and on it she kept a long and steadfast watch, sometimes at a slow saunter, sometimes ensconced on one of the benches behind the tall iron railing. Though she dreaded recognition from passers in a quarter so fashionable, she trusted to her plain attire, her drawn veil and the raw inclemency of the day.

At last a cab rattled up to the door of her house. Atchinson first emerged, then her niece. They quickly disappeared, and a new term of waiting began for the lady in the Park. It had lasted but a brief while, however, when two sharp whistles for a hansom sounded from a footman who came forth on the stoop. Very soon the required vehicle rounded one of the Park Lane corners. Then Lady Rosamond hurried down from the stoop, entered the cab alone and was driven rapidly away.

If Mrs. Dennistoun had seen the girl's face less distantly she would have noted there an odd conflict of expressions. On reaching home Lady Rosamond had been handed two missives. One, seeing that it wore the brown apparel of a telegram, she promptly tore open. Her heart bounded with joy as she read:

Suit won. A complete triumph. This is the last opposition they will presume to make. I am given the whole landed estate and twelve thousand a year outside of it. Hurrying to you for congratulations as fast as opportunity will allow.

ASHBURNHAM.

Lady Rosamond's eyes were dancing and her cheeks had begun to flame. She turned to Atchinson, a large, plain-visaged person, the very type of a respectful English tire-woman.

"Where is Mrs. Dennistoun?" she

excitedly asked. "Stay—no—I'll go to her." Then she glanced at the other communication. "No stamp?—aunt's handwriting!" Next minute she was reading the dastardly falsehood, and gave a stifled cry.

"How unfortunate! Look, Atchinson! Yes, you may read it all through. You see Mrs. Dennistoun was hurt near Ruthven Gate and has been taken into Mr. Dolmar's house. She wants me to come at once—and bring no servant."

"Yes—my lady." Atchinson appeared to jerk the words oddly from tense lips. "I—I—excuse me, my lady." She stood before her young mistress in evident embarrassment.

"Well, Atchinson, what is it?"

"Nothing. And yet—oh, my lady, mightn't there be some—danger?"

"Danger?" The girl totally misunderstood her. "Oh, I must go at once! Tell them to call a cab, immediately. And, Atchinson—if Mr. Leigh should come during my absence—I'm expecting him—be sure to say that I very much desired he should wait."

She was half-way on her journey before it flashed across her that to enter Stayne Dolmar's house would be stinkingly distasteful. But in an instant pity overcame this repulsion. She rang the bell of the huge house at Ruthven Gate with a double wish buoying her. First, she longed to see just how grave was the injury her aunt had sustained. Second, she yearned to tell her of the splendid triumph secured by Ashburnham, and how her marriage—speedy, as she knew that her lover would now insist on making it—might work deliverance from Dolmar's threats. And yet—"how strange," she found herself reflecting, "that chance should have brought me here—here, of all places in town!" Everything was on a scale of great magnificence. The servant who answered her summons was a most imposing person in almost lurid livery, with powdered hair. "My aunt, Mrs. Dennistoun," began Lady Rosamond, "is she—"

But here a familiar voice cut her

short. "It's you at last, Lady Rosamond," said Stayne Dolmar, coming toward her through the huge tapestried hall, in which a marble fountain played, with marble mermaids and Tritons exquisitely carved reflecting themselves in its crystal pool. "Will you kindly accompany me?" Dolmar continued. He made no other greeting, and the newcomer, a little hesitantly at first, followed him as he walked a few steps ahead. Her feet soon exchanged the marble floor for one clad with mossy carpet. She had a confused sense of crossing three or four thresholds, and at length, when her guide had brought her to a chamber full of Turkish embellishments, a marvel of Oriental beauty, something about the mellow thud of the door, that he held open and then let close of its own springy impetus, caused her to stand quite still in vague alarm.

"But my aunt, Mr. Dolmar. Where is my aunt?"

"Presently, Lady Rosamond. Presently you shall see her—yes." He had lowered his head and was moving here and there among the divans and mats, with both hands thrust into his pockets.

The girl stared at him. Suddenly a pang of fear pierced her.

"My aunt," she re-demanded.

"Will you not stay quite calm, please," he urged, "while I say a few words to you?"

"About—about my aunt?"

"Yes—and other things." He stood quite aloof from her, and waved one hand toward a low chair, arabesqued and tufted, a little miracle of Turkish art, close at her side. Then, as she shook her head, he pursued: "Do not dream of the slightest danger. You are absolutely safe. Your aunt is not here. She wrote that letter of her own free will. I asked her to do it, and she complied. It was to bring you here. Don't turn so pale. I am merely telling you something; pray listen. After you have heard it you may go at once. You are only a captive, please believe, while I make to you my disclosure. It is one that can-

not fail, I am sure, to interest you. Afterward you will be perfectly free to go."

"I—I prefer to go now—without hearing another word!"

Dolmar spoke very softly. "Go as a ruined woman!" He paused a moment to watch the effect of this lie—for an atrocious lie it was—before he developed it, unfolded it in all its bane and blight.

"Ruined? I?" She coolly laughed at this. "You are ridiculous." But he saw a fluttering in the bend of her white throat, just below the chin.

"It does sound sensational, does it not?" he acceded. "Quite in the Drury Lane 'unhand-me-villain' style, except that there needn't be the faintest loud talk, and the villain—if he deserve so bad a name—hasn't the remotest idea of becoming violent. My sole request, as I've already stated, is that you will grant me your attention for a few moments. The truth is, my dear Lady Rosamond, you have been seen entering my house alone. But that is not all. No less than five persons have seen you enter it, and these are persons whose tongues can, and often do, make themselves alarmingly sharp."

"You—set them—to spy on me?" The voice that addressed him was lifeless, but with it went a look that blazed contempt.

Before this look Dolmar's glance wavered and drooped. He had told her his lie. Believing it, would not terror strike her helpless? And he still assured himself that she must believe it.

He was right. He saw her slender form sway a little now and one of her hands catch furtively at the cushioned chair.

This evidence of weakness added to the diabolism of his courage. "No matter, Lady Rosamond, how these people got their knowledge, they have observed and concluded, and you are fearfully incriminated. You came here alone, and they are aware of it. By to-morrow evening all London—or at least all the London that can spoil a gentlewoman's name—will be talk-

ing of your act. Now, I have a clergyman here." He swung his big body round and parted the rich hangings of a door that apparently led to other apartments beyond those already traversed. On the panel of this door he rapped thrice, and then re-confronted his companion.

"This gentleman," he resumed, "will make us man and wife before two witnesses the moment you give consent." His tones took a blandly persuasive key. They were indeed so suave that anyone hearing them, with no comprehension of the meaning they conveyed, would have thought them inspired by actual chivalry.

Lady Rosamond did not answer. Perhaps she could not, just then. A little later, from the door at which Dolmar had rapped, a young man in clerical attire appeared. He could scarcely have been much older than two-and-twenty. His face, refined of outline, was filled with timidity and pain. He walked draggingly, as though every fresh step hurt either muscles or nerves, or both. He held a dark book as women do, hugging it beneath one arm.

After the departure of her niece Mrs. Dennistoun suddenly blamed herself, with a guilty flush, for not remembering that the girl might, in all likelihood, mention to her maid the contents of the letter. Agitated by this thought, she was undecided whether to enter the house or not, and so walked, in her confusion and perplexity, toward Hyde Park Corner. Soon after she had ceased to watch her own residence another cab dashed up to the door, and from it alighted Ashburnham Leigh.

"Both Mrs. Dennistoun and Lady Rosamond out?" he said, disappointedly, to the servant who admitted him. "Well, I'll wait." And he passed up stairs into the drawing-room. A moment later Atchinson appeared.

"Beg pardon, sir," she said, "but Lady Rosamond asked me, just before she went away, to tell you, if you

came while she was out, that she hoped you'd remain till her return."

He noticed something nervous in the woman's demeanor; he had known her for years down in Norfolkshire, where she had not held the specialized position, as now, of his sweetheart's maid.

"What's up, Atchinson?" he queried. "Don't you feel well?" So gloriously happy was Ashburnham himself that it seemed to him as if everybody in the world ought to reflect his joy.

"Oh, yes, sir, thank you. But, if you please, sir, I—I think I might as well show you this." And Atchinson handed him the letter that her young mistress had so recently given her.

Ashburnham scanned it. "Too bad!" he exclaimed. Then, frowning abruptly: "She has gone *there!* Well, fatality, I suppose. . . . I say, Atchinson," as he handed her back the letter, "you seem to have something on your mind. What is it?"

"Oh, sir," said the woman, with a little perturbed curtsey, "I—I didn't want my lady to go there *alone!*"

"But Mrs. Dennistoun is there. Doesn't she herself write so?"

"Yes, sir—oh, yes." Another perturbed curtsey. "Will you have some tea, sir?"

"Thank you—and please have it very hot."

Ashburnham flung himself into a chair and took up a book from a table near it. He tried to read, but could not fix his attention. When the tea arrived it was not Atchinson that brought it. Was she afraid, he reflected, that he would question her? She certainly *had* shown an odd bearing. Soon he began to pace and re-pace the floor. How long would Rosamond remain away? Ought he to join her at Ruthven Gate? But she had left an enjoinder for him to remain, if he came, and her commands, like her treasured self, were sacred. Still, this accident might subject her to fresh unwelcome advances from a man she hated—a man she had both told him and written him she hated, and who had proved himself the most pertinacious of all her re-

cent suitors. This was doubtless what Atchinson meant. What else *could* she have meant? So, nearly an hour passed, and then an amazing experience burst on Ashburnham.

Tired, with all her boldness beginning to wane, and harsh pangs of conscience replacing it, Mrs. Dennistoun let herself into the house by means of her own latchkey. She glanced for a moment into the dining-room and then ascended the stairs. Her next step was toward the drawing-room. She crossed the threshold and came face to face with the sole occupant.

"Ashburnham!"

"It's *you*, Mrs. Dennistoun?" As the young man spoke he sprang toward her. "You're—well? You're *not* laid up at Stayne Dolmar's house? What does this mean?"

"Who told you?" was all the astounded woman could say.

"Why, Atchinson, of course. Rose gave her the letter—*your* letter—before she hurried to you. Was it a forgery?"

A gush of wild tears answered him as Mrs. Dennistoun sank into a chair. "Oh, Ashburnham, he *made* me write it! I'm in his power! I've borrowed money from him—he's threatened me with exposure in the courts—he's—"

Ashburnham towered menacingly over her for a second, with clenched hands lifted high, as if he meant to strike her dead. Perhaps, for just that fleet second, he did mean to strike her dead. Then, rushing from the room, he left her huddled together in physical affright, her very sobs choked because of it and her face bloodless.

It seemed to him an eternity, when he had gained Park Lane, before he could find a cab. As one stopped he spoke hurriedly to the driver, whose eyes quickly glistened. Another eternity, and he stood at last on Stayne Dolmar's stoop.

"My name is Ashburnham Leigh," he said, with a swift push through the doorway that a large flunkey unclosed. "I wish to see Lady Rosamond Garthe,

whom I know to be here. Quick, now, my man; take me at once where she is."

The attendant stood scowling and dismayed. "My orders, sir—"

"I've no concern with your orders," was the sharp interruption. "You'll take mine, and show me where I can find the lady I've mentioned. If you refuse, I warn you that for all your master's money the police may give you *their* orders before you're many hours older."

Ashburnham now stood several yards forward in the great hall. The man, who knew half patrician London by sight and had a keen eye for faces, remembered him perfectly. He had seen him in this same house at a great ball scarcely three weeks before. What he knew and what he guessed concerning Lady Rosamond's appearance there to-day only he could have told.

He slowly shut the heavy door, while Ashburnham, with visible impatience, waited. Then, in all his braveries of powdered hair and yellow braidings and silk-encased calves, he walked close to the young man whose attitude was so unceremoniously and uncompromisingly beyond him.

"I don't like, sir," he said, with much quiet respect and a certain distinct dignity, "to have that word 'police' addressed to me. I have not lived very long in Mr. Dolmar's employment." And then the ingrained conservatism, snobbery—call it what one will—of the upper-class English servant would have its way. "I lived for twelve years, sir, until the time of his death, with the late Earl of Walthamstow, and—"

"Lord Walthamstow!" broke in Ashburnham. "That speaks to your credit. I knew him well. Indeed, he happened to be my uncle."

"Oh, why, yes, sir!" exclaimed the man. "Mr. Ashburnham Leigh! I've so often heard him speak of you! But you never came—" And there the speaker paused, and shifted his eyes.

"The family quarrel," said Ashburnham. "You heard, of course.

It was between the Countess and my mother."

"Yes, sir—I heard, of course."

Ashburnham caught the man's hand and gripped it hard. "Look here, John—"

"James, sir."

"Look here, James, you're living with a scoundrel. I want you to help me—to help your old master's nephew! I—I feel as if I couldn't speak fast enough, John—James, I mean—for I'm in such a devil of a hurry!" Then, as he continued, James turned as pale as his artificially whitened locks.

"My God, sir! Excuse me. But I'll—I'll help all I can. Her ladyship is in yonder. You pass through two rooms, and in the third, I think, you'll find her."

"Come with me, James," Ashburnham said. He looked steadily at the man. "You understand. I've been very explicit. You told me that you'd help me all you could. And if you keep your word you shall never regret it. I promise you that."

Without waiting for reply Ashburnham walked on. He heard James's footsteps close behind him. Two rooms were crossed, and then, at a closed door, Ashburnham paused.

"Listen, James," he said. "I hear voices."

One was Dolmar's. "You'll risk it all, you foolish girl!"

The other voice was Lady Rosamond's. "I'll risk everything. Let people talk as they please. It's you, as I'll prove, who have risked far too much!"

"One moment. Your aunt?"

"Poor, half-maddened Aunt Meta! I'll make her confess the whole folly into which you drove her!"

After that a slight silence. Then the voice Ashburnham knew so well.

"How dare you! Let go my arm! I'll—"

Ashburnham tried the doorknob. It would not turn.

"Mr. Dolmar!" cried a new, pitifully piping voice, "I forbid you to keep this lady here against her will!"

Ashburnham had veered round to-

ward James. "He's locked it. Come—you're strong. We'll break it open!"

"Knock first, sir," began James. "But stop!" he broke off. "Follow me. There's another way in."

A few rapid turnings, and they found this way. The door at the end of their dizzying route was unlocked. Ashburnham flung it open.

What he saw was an interior orientally beautiful, and Dolmar clasping the wrist of Lady Rosamond and devouring her face with glances that made the ugliness of his own a weird pathos of entreaty. He was fat, uncouth, repulsive, and the grasp was unquestionably one of lawless violence. Yet, somehow, despair and real passion so changed his entire attitude that there was no brutal hint in it, but rather the mute, if turbid, protest of a spirit driven by its own pampered and flattered past into extremities of appeal.

Ashburnham saw nothing of this. Dolmar heard the advancing step, and half-turned. Then the other leaped on him, and he was clutched and whirled round. The two men faced each other; and Dolmar, with a smothered roar, struck out. He hit an arm, and then a clenched fist, that were Ashburnham's defense. His offense followed lightning-like, and Dolmar was felled and half stunned by a blow between the eyes which might, indeed, have done worse if a low and broad divan just behind him had not received his big, flaccid shape.

James and the young clergyman bent over him. He groaned forlornly in his ludicrous yet woful collapse. He swore wrathfully, half incoherently, but it was clear that, though his brain was whirling, he had by no means lost consciousness.

Ashburnham's arms were about his sweetheart now. "I learned everything, everything, Rose! I saw your aunt; she confessed. Come, now; courage. It's a sad plight for a bride, but our honeymoon will be bright enough."

"A bride? honeymoon?" she murmured.

Ashburnham, with great calmness, while he kept one hand clasping hers, turned toward the little group of three. His look selected the trembling young priest.

"You're a clergyman of the Church of England?"

"Yes," was the faltered answer.

"Do you wish to be disgraced forever—damned, shunned, execrated? Yes? In that case take your own course. . . . No? Then I can save you." Here Ashburnham beckoned to the wretched fellow, who drew nearer. In his ear Ashburnham spoke swiftly and sternly.

The clergyman, drearily pallid, gave stammering answer. "Yes—yes—I know. But—witnesses are required."

"How many?"

"Two."

"Well, there are two! One is James, yonder, and the other is his master."

The miserable young man waved

helplessly his slender hands. "But he—Mr. Dolmar—is—"

"Insensible? Nothing of the sort. I know just how hard I struck him, and he's now perfectly aware of all that passes." Ashburnham raised a warning finger. "Stand over there by the mantel. Get your book. Obey me, or you'll rue your refusal till the last hour you live!"

The unhappy creature did obey. Here a deep groan sounded from Dolmar. But he did not rise from the divan, where James had set a pillow behind his aching and throbbing head.

Ashburnham now clasped more tightly the hand of his love, and his eyes burned into hers all the adoration that he lacked opportunity to speak.

"You consent, Rose?"

"Why not?" she answered, very faintly.

He led her toward the clergyman. In a tone tranquil and yet teeming with command, he again spoke:

"Marry me to this lady."



ANTEROS

IN those dim years before I met with you
I dreamed how Love one day would come to me,
A plumèd prince, who on his bended knee,
His sovereign lady would acclaim and woo,
And I should hold his homage as my due,
With smiling pride elude him, nor agree
Too readily to listen to his plea,
Though, as I dreamed, his every word was true.

Then came the night I looked into your eyes.
O Love that burns and memory that sears!
I am no longer proud, though strangely wise
In passion's mysteries and pain and tears—
A starving beggar at your knees, who cries
For bread to dull the yearning of the years!

ELSA BARKER.



ONLY ORNAMENTAL

MRS. WAGGLES—Isn't this a nice, comfortable cozy-corner?

WAGGLES—It used to be, my dear, before you began fixing it up.

OTTO AND THE AUTO

'TIS strange how fashion makes us change the objects we admire;
 We used to sing the tireless steed, but now the steedless tire.
 So Otto bought an auto, so as not to be antique,
 But the thing was autocratic,
 As well as automatic,
 And the auto wouldn't auto as it ought to, so to speak.

He thought to get an auto-operator for the work,
 And first he tried a circus man and then he tried a Turk,
 For he knew the circus man drove fifty horses with success;
 And if a man be shifty
 Enough to manage fifty,
 It's palpable enough he ought to manage one horse-less.

As for the Turk, 'tis also plain, deny it if you can,
 He ought to run an auto, since a Turk's an Ottoman.
 'Twas all no use, so Otto moved to Alabama, purely
 That he might say, "I'm Otto,
 From Mobile, and my motto:
 'A Mobile Otto ought to run an automobile surely.'"

Then Otto sought to auto on the auto as he ought to,
 But the auto sought to auto as Otto never thought to,
 So Otto he got hot, oh, very hot! as he ought not to,
 And Otto said, "This auto *ought* to auto, and it's *got* to."
 And Otto fought the auto, and the auto it fought Otto,
 Till the auto also got too hot to auto as it ought to.
 And then, Great Scott! the auto shot to heaven—so did Otto—
 Where Otto's auto autos now as Otto's auto ought to.

EDMUND VANCE COOKE.



SOMETHING BETTER

MRS. PECK—When I go away to the country do you think you will be
 able to exist without me?
 HENRY PECK—Why—er—my dear, it won't be existing then.



TRULY A THOROUGHBRED

WANDERING WILLIE—I've seen better days. I uster be in sassiety.
 WEARY WAGGLES—So ye've never done nuthin' all yer life?

ACCORDING TO GIBSON

By Erin Graham

FRANKNESS about one's personal attractions is rare. But I wish to state that even my brother Ted admitted I was not as plain as I might be. There is a faint praise that damns, but the faint praise bestowed by a brother means more than a cycle of sonnets from a very minor poet, or orchids from a French nobleman in contracted circumstances.

I am tall, not too slender, and my head possesses what Laura Jean Libbey would call "a deer-like poise." All these things I regarded as desirable, and secretly pitied women who were waistless and whose necks were brief. But two years ago a great affliction was laid on me, although it approached in the guise of a compliment.

On an evil day, Charles Dana, whose surname is Gibson, became an illustrator of note. The American maiden, according to Gibson, had been before the public for many seasons before Gerald Crofts, who is poet by hair and by avocation, discovered in my face a resemblance to the stately creatures whom our artist had portrayed so often. At first, I was exalted in spirit and tried to look as Gibsonish as possible. I was visiting the Seatons in their Adirondack home at the time of the discovery, and most of the women in the house party were scornful to a degree and could not see the resemblance. This lack of vision on their part assured me that Gerald was in the right, and my mien became loftier.

Frank Seaton had been very attentive in New York during the Winter, and I was placidly looking forward to

the day when he would break forth into a proposal. I cannot say that his footsteps made my twenty-four-year-old heart flutter, or that I considered him a knight or a hero, or anything of that kind. In fact, there was nothing brilliant about Frank, except the color of his ties and the gleam of his diamond studs. But, although he had little literary knowledge, his bank book was above suspicion, and his heart was as generous as the checks in his imported troussers. Wherefore I considered him carefully and reached the modest conclusion that I might safely take Frank and his fortune, to have and to hold, until death or divorce should us part. But verily, I had reckoned without my host, or rather without the son of my host; and I found to my discomfort that the more I was called "the Gibson Girl" the less anxious seemed my supposed adorer to call me his.

A sweet young thing from Chicago—Ethel Rand—was the only woman in the household who had taken kindly to my new title, and I heard her tell Frank that I was "such a splendid woman with a truly regal air." She was rather insignificant herself, with a quantity of fair hair that she arranged in a floating fashion about her small, pale face; and her eyes had an appealing expression, that might indicate a yearning either for another cup of tea or for lifelong protection.

One night I was wandering about near the golf links when I heard my name uttered by the gentle Ethel in a tone that made me pause. She and Frank were seated on a rustic bench that suggested first love and all things idyllic. Perhaps I should be ashamed

to confess it—but I reflected that all was fair in feminine war, and I listened with the most flattering attention.

"But are you sure, Frank, that you don't love Miss Ashley? She's so magnificent and all that."

"Dead sure!" said the perfidious Frank. "It's all very well to look up to a woman and call her after foolish sketches. I for one can't stand those black-and-white figures; give me a real good picture with lots of rich color in it. I never could live up to that sort of woman, you know. A man likes a dear little pet, like—"

But I did not wait for him to complete the comparison. My sense of honor, as I am pleased to think, here asserted itself, and I realized that it would be wrong to listen to lovers' sacred confidences.

The engagement was announced on the following day, and there was a shadow of disappointment in Miss Rand's azure eyes when I showed no astonishment, but congratulated Frank with easy cordiality. He was a little confused and very much overspread with blushes, while his dainty fiancée remarked:

"It's so sweet of you to say pretty things about me, for I feel very young and ignorant. I'm glad that you approve, because you and Frank have been *such* friends."

"Indeed! I should not call you ignorant. You have very little to learn, I am sure." I spoke lightly, but Miss Ethel understood, and her blue eyes looked more appealing than ever.

The wedding took place in November, and was a wonderful chrysanthemum affair, with a smiling bride and a nervous groom, who was dressed not wisely but too swell. I sent a beautiful set of Browning as my present, because I knew it would be of no use to either of them, and it seemed like an assertion of intellectual superiority.

By this time I had begun to weary of the Gibson rôle; and when Christmas came, bringing me pictures of that horrid, stagey girl in every pose

and plight, I was ready to curse Charles Dana in pure Castilian speech, and to wish that he might marry a woman who would wear curlpapers until luncheon hour. Gerald Crofts and his theories were the fashion, and therefore all my city friends and acquaintances became enamored of the Gibson idea, and treated me accordingly. I was given distant and respectful admiration, and when I became disgusted and sulky people called my mood "interesting *hauteur*," while their admiration increased. It is all very well to be called the possessor of a distinctive style, but no mere woman cares to be regarded as if she were a Gothic cathedral or the Sphinx. Men do not fall in love with a "type," and it is unpleasant to be approved of but not desired.

At length I resorted to various devices for destroying the Gibson illusion. But whether I wore my hair in bristling pompadour or dragged it mournfully across my cheeks in a Burne-Jones fashion, the style was of no avail in altering my resemblance to those majestic young persons who had become my evil geniuses. The most tantalizing feature of their frequent appearance was that someone was always looking lovingly at them, implying that their distinction meant lovers and lucre. I gazed at them as they leaned romantically over rustic fences or reclined in classic poses on the links, and wondered how they were so stately and lovable at the same time. I had wild thoughts of writing to the artist and beseeching him to turn his gifted pencil to the depiction of picturesque "piccaninnies" or Indian chiefs done in red. But after a week's consideration I resolved not to do anything so hazardous. Then I made a solemn vow that I would become fat and comfortable in appearance, and to that purpose devoted myself to saccharine food, feeling it was better to be fat than formidable. But my mental worry must have directly counteracted the cream I drank and the chocolate I devoured, and I still remained the

statuesque lady of the illustrations. The years sauntered by, and I resolved to go to Europe, where I should avoid English and American tourists.

I had a delightful rest from my spectre, and Ted and I took a trunkful of photographs. But after twelve months of French and Spanish voices one has a kind of longing for the sights and sounds of Lesser New York. So we came back, and once more I found myself at the Seatons' Summer home. Frank and Ethel were there, and matrimony seemed to agree excellently with their placid souls. Ethel's eyes had lost their plaintive expression, and Frank's clothing was not quite so fearfully and wonderfully made as that of his bachelor days.

Feminine friendship is a mild form of insanity, in my usual estimation. But to my surprise I became very fond of a rosy-cheeked young Scotch-woman who was visiting the Seatons. Her name was Gladys Campbell, and she was the first natural woman I had met. Her father had attained unto wealth by the road, or rather watery path, of transatlantic steamers, and his only daughter had become famous by refusing a seventy-year-old earl. I asked her one day if the report was true, and she laughingly confessed.

"Why should I have married the poor old body?"

"But the title!"

"Indeed, the name of Campbell is none to be ashamed of. And then, who could love a tottering old man near his dotage?"

She really believed in love, then—this heiress of many acres of heather. I at last told her of my Gibson sorrow, but she refused to see anything mournful about it. Just as I had finished a second recital of my loathing for the sinister pictures, I saw a stalwart man coming across the links. There was something strangely familiar about the figure and the strong, clean-shaven face. Miss Campbell saw him, too, and exclaimed:

"Why, it's my brother Jack. He's a week earlier than I expected."

Miss Campbell's brother was almost a giant, and yet he did not seem to be too strong for grace. But even as I shook hands with him I was conscious of a half-recognition of previous acquaintance that annoyed me. At dinner he sat next to me, and as I turned to talk about the latest novel, Gladys said:

"Jack, Mr. Crofts says you are like a Gibson man."

We were a small party at dinner that night, and everyone turned to survey the blushing Scot. Frank, with the tact that makes him a comforting friend in a crisis, almost shouted:

"By Jove, that is queer! Marian Ashley is always called the Gibson Girl." He stared and chuckled meaningly, until we thoroughly understood his suggested development of our horrible resemblance. I knew then where I had seen those resolute features, and I felt a strong desire to do murder and relieve Gerald Crofts of what he called in his poems "the feverish dream of life." But a Gibson maiden would not be at home in the chair of electrocution, and I crushed my bloodthirsty impulse. I had found Jack Campbell such an interesting man, although, or perhaps because, we had said very little to each other; and now this suggested likeness would spoil even an acquaintanceship. He had, of course, a horror of ridicule. All men have, but Scotchmen have it in an acute form. If I had not belonged to New York society and the nineteenth century, I should certainly have mingled tears with the mint sauce.

The festive game of whist was played until a late hour, and though I understand just enough of the rules of the game to reduce my partner to suicidal depression, I was rather glad of the opportunity the exceeding calm afforded to study the features of the representative of the Campbell clan. Of course I was inexpressibly tired of the women in those golf and seaside sketches; but I had, to a cer-

tain extent, admired the man, and there was really some cause for Gerald's remark concerning Mr. Campbell. His face was stern, with the kind of severity that is all the more winsome when it relaxes into tenderness. But what was I thinking of! I was not a schoolgirl of the white-muslin-and-gush stage. Nevertheless, I continued to drown myself in the depths of a pair of dark-blue eyes, that were just the color of a Scotch loch; and I could imagine them becoming an intense gray-blue, just like Loch Lorne when the storm clouds hover over it. And what a strong hand he had, with its healthy brown tinge! The fingers were powerful but supple, and might have belonged to a Highland chief or a minstrel in his halls.

I looked up, once more to encounter a glance of intense amusement from the aforementioned eyes. Tell it not in Gotham, publish it not in the society journals—I blushed as redly, as hotly, as if I had been fifteen and convent-bred. Scottish lochs, indeed! His eyes were of a very ordinary blue, and he had an intensely conceited expression that was enough to mar a beauty that consisted merely of regular features. He had an odious smile, that did not relax his firm mouth by a single line. After the whist ordeal was over, and my partner—the elder Mr. Seaton—had sought consolation in a decanter, I retired to a small table and proceeded to open a large volume I had not seen before. Mr. Campbell approached, as I was listlessly regarding the first sketch, and to my horror I found that I was looking at two lovers of the Gibson type. Mr. Campbell saw them, and lazily remarked, as he seated himself near me:

"I believe you are not proud of your Gibson reputation, Miss Ashley. I am a fellow victim, as a party of tourists, with whom I traveled through the Tyrol last year, discovered the same resemblance that Crofts professes to see. I don't perceive it myself. It is rather odd that we should meet."

"Stranger things have happened," I replied, stiffly. "And I think that *you* are really very like the Gibson type."

The originality of my first remark seemed to appeal to him, and there was a smile near his eyes as he said: "I suppose you are rather sick of his pictures by this time."

"Entirely. I think his people are hideous."

"Ah! and you think I am like the Gibson Man." He laughed openly now, and I hated him with violence. There was absolutely nothing to be said, as I had burned my fleet behind me by my previous statement, and I sat there in foolish silence, blushing profoundly for the second time in an hour, and miserably conscious that he was deliberately scrutinizing my unfortunate features.

"I can hardly agree with you about the sketches. I consider the Gibson Girl a miracle of grace and sweetness."

Just then Gladys joined us, and I could have wept on her blue satin shoulder strap in sheer gladness at her coming.

The next day I attempted to avoid Mr. Campbell; but he appeared provokingly unconscious of my coldness, and treated me as if I were a child whose whims were to be tolerated, but who was on no account to have the moon, should she manifest a desire for that silvery trifle. So a week passed away, and I was on the verge of nervous prostration through pure irritability over the Gibson Man's superior attitude. I could not quarrel with him, because he was so disgustingly polite, although a twinkle was never far from his eyes, and he was always cheerful in his hope that I was not "feeling tired." My manner might be of the Klondike, but his was always of the temperate zone. One afternoon, after he had beaten me in a tennis set, Frank Seaton, who never saw anything beyond his heavenward-pointing nose, and who invariably talked of what he *did* see, remarked:

"You two ought to be great chums,

but you are always unfair to Campbell, Marian."

As Frank walked away I felt an idiotic tear stealing down my cheek.

"What is the matter, Miss Ashley? Have I offended you, or was the game too much for you? I'm awfully sorry."

The tone was contrite tenderness itself; and—yes—his eyes were rather nice, when he did not laugh. But there were other people approaching; and I fled from the field to seek the very best rice powder, and to wonder what would have happened had the "other people" kept their distance.

But when dinner came some demon prompted me to be as perverse as woman can be, and I almost succeeded in annoying my Highland chief. At last I became ashamed of a speech I had made concerning the "Land o' Cakes," and I lowered my voice becomingly as I said:

"I am afraid that last speech was rude. I really didn't mean it."

The blue eyes met mine with a flash of steel, and a voice as chilly as the breeze from the Hebrides replied:

"I am glad to hear that you did not mean it."

Dessert was eaten in a silence that could be felt, and after the pomp and circumstance of black coffee, I pleaded a severe headache—it was not all a lie—and took refuge under a spreading chestnut tree, where there was a beloved old chair whose antique ugliness went back to Colonial days. But never could it have held a more disconsolate damsel than the one who flung herself on its wooden mercy and bewailed the evil of her ways.

How abominable I had been! I was ill-bred and rude. Because of Frank Seaton's miserable jokes and a certain sub-mocking smile in the eyes of an uncouth Scot I had lost all sense of dignity and had acted like a spoiled child. But was the brother of Gladys Campbell uncouth? He resented repeated attacks on his country; but any self-respecting man would be capable of such resentment. I had

always despised the Anglomaniac, but it was hardly necessary for me to become a Scotophobian.

As I mused on my sins of incivility they seemed so large that, for the second time in twenty-four hours, tears came to my eyes. I pride myself on being an unweeping maiden, but on that occasion I gave way completely, and wept freely on the unsympathetic bark of the chestnut tree.

Suddenly I became aware of a cigar fragrance, and a cigar means man. I looked up in dismay to see a red light, beyond which was the concerned face of Mr. Campbell. The straggling light of an impertinent moonbeam revealed my face, that must have looked damp in the extreme. There was another chair beneath that old tree, and Mr. Campbell dragged it very close to mine before he seated himself.

"Please tell me what is the matter. You must be in great distress."

"Nothing," came incoherently from the inadequate shelter of my best lace handkerchief.

"But you don't expect me to believe that, you know." My left hand was suddenly grasped firmly by two very capable hands belonging to the masterly Scot. "Your hand is very hot, and I should think you were feverish."

"You—you wouldn't care to see my tongue, would you?" I gasped, hysterically. Mr. Campbell laughed softly and continued to caress my hand. I did not try to withdraw it, because he is a very strong man, and there is nothing more undignified than a struggle. I think we did not say anything for about five minutes, and then my nerves became a little more controllable.

"Mr. Campbell," I began, firmly, "I have been horribly rude to you for several days, and—"

"But you have not been crying about that?"

"N—no—not exactly. I am altogether cross and blue, and I don't know what I'm crying about. It sounds ridiculous, but I think it must be second childhood."

He was holding both my hands by this time, and seemed to be thinking deeply.

"Miss Ashley, why do you dislike me so much?"

"I—I don't exactly dislike you."

"Thank you. I wonder if Seaton's idiotic jokes have anything to do with your very marked aversion to my society." Then he proceeded to kiss my hands for, I should say, about ten minutes.

"Marian," he said, very softly, "do you dislike me at all? Do you think it would be uninteresting to spend your life in finding fault with me?"

"I—I don't know," was the only answer that my stupid lips could form. He promptly placed his arm round my waist, and I hid my face on his shoulder, because tears are not becoming to a woman of any style of loveliness.

"Then you will really be Marian Campbell some time, very soon?"

"On one condition."

"What is it, my American beauty?"

"That you will never—never, even when I am most unkind, call me 'the Gibson Girl.'"

"I shall always have much prettier names for you than that, darling.

But you haven't called me 'Jack' yet."

So I called him "Jack" and several other things, and we returned to the other world—beyond the chestnut tree—where the people were playing whist and similar tiresome games. The players looked at us with suspicion; but we sat in a corner and looked at Gibson pictures with the greatest calmness.

Gladys came to my room that night in a pale-blue dressing gown and a state of excitement.

"It is so delightful of you two people. I thought you disliked Jack; but I am so glad. Of course I could see from the first that he was awfully in love with you." Gladys is a remarkably sweet woman, and has such good judgment.

"How could you think I disliked him, Gladys? No one could really do that. Of course, I didn't want to be too—too effusive."

Gladys laughed. "Why, you have been like an Arctic night in manner. But I know you'll be happy ever after. And, Marian—" she added, as she reached the door.

"Yes?"

"We'll have some lovely Gibson tableaux."



SUNDAY IN SLEEPY HOLLOW

THE poppy in a sunny nook
Puts on a brand-new bonnet
Of scarlet satin, pinked and frilled,
With dewdrops shining on it.
The marigold beside the gate
Is dancing with its fellow
And blowing kisses to the wind
In fluffy skirts of yellow.

The maiden lilies stand apart
In clean white muslin dresses.
With morning glories pink and blue
The corn binds up its tresses.
The pansy wears a velvet cloak,
Though this is Summer weather,
For in their Sunday very best
The flowers are out together.

MINNA IRVING.

THE KISSES OF ARCADY

By Richard Wilsted

ARCADIUS DOLGONÓGHI stood six feet three in his Cosack riding boots. He had generally to stoop in order to kiss anything, from the gilt cross held out by a *pope* at a service of the Orthodox Church to the bald pate of Fethersbee at the Liao-kow Club.

Ladies laughed at Arcadius, and men snubbed him, but children, who are primitive barbarians, were naturally attracted by such a great, handsome, emotional savage, and they accepted his hirsute kisses and his paper-covered caramels from Moscow with delight. As for the European women in the small Chinese outport of Liao-kow, they compared notes and agreed that no man could be taken seriously whose knowledge of three languages was confined to conjugating the regular verb "to love." The hands of them all had been squeezed in his lion's paw and had felt the noisy pressure of his lips. They said that it hurt, and added that his ogling was overdone. He had eyes like a big dog, and they looked unutterable tenderness at the world, and particularly at Fethersbee, who was fifty and fat, and stood only five feet and a half in his white spats.

Dolgonóghi was highly paid for a duty he did not perform, namely, the management of a coal mine in Manchuria. Vanderlyn, an American engineer, did the work on a small salary, drank *vodka* with his chief, and referred to him in Anglo-Saxon company as "the Kissing Bug." When asked how he contrived to escape the sting he would wink and reply, grimly:

"Virginia plug. The K. B. has a

holy horror of chewing tobacco. I never used the weed in this form till I joined the mine, but I have found it a specific. The K. B. can only smoke pasteboard and camel's hair. Officially I chew, but on the quiet I still enjoy a Key West."

Fethersbee did not chew, smoke or drink, and was mortally shy. He was the local British Consul, one of the old school, founded on the cramming and muzzling system. He had been loaded down in London with book lore to pass a competitive examination, and after arrival in Pekin he had been further handicapped with Chinese hieroglyphics. To complete the derangement of his balance, he had been kept ten years in the miasmatic valley of the Yangtse, and then sent to Manchuria to try to bluff the Russian Bear.

When Dolgonóghi's mine had been wrecked by a strike of coolies, which was connived at by the local Manchurian officials, he escaped with Vanderlyn and his interpreter to Liao-kow, where he spent the Winter, pending reference of the matter to St. Petersburg and Pekin. At the club bar he waxed maudlin over his misfortunes, weeping and wringing the hands of his listeners.

"Ya loose yeversing. Moy house burn, moy furnish smash. Zat nossing. Moy feeling hurt. Zat too much. Mandarin come at mine. Say 'Yerth Dragon' trouble; not can vork mine no more. Ya give him plenty *vodka*. Ya say: 'You moy freend, googe freend.' Moy heart varm for him. Ya kees him. Him say Ya bite him. Not bite. Ya kees—like zees!"

Here he made an effort to salute Fethersbee, who ducked in time.

"Him vish fight moy viz svord. Ya say: 'Dovolno!' [Enough!] Ya keel him viz vip!"

"That's right," remarked Vanderlyn, aside, to the others. "When he kissed the old Tartar the fellow did not understand and tried to draw his sabre, but it was rusted in the sheath. The K. B. did not need a second hint, but promptly knocked him on the head with the butt of a Chinese cart whip. There was the devil to pay. I thought I saw my finish. I had to hold up the crowd with my 44."

Arcadius filled all the glasses with curaçao, taking no denial.

"You all moy googe freend. Drink, drink! Moy feeling hurt if not drink."

Fethersbee had retreated behind a billiard table, but the Russian pursued him with a brimming glass.

"Nyet, nyet, Sir Fezzersbee! You moy googe freend. Drink viz moy!"

Fethersbee reluctantly extended his hand across the table, and it was grabbed in the gigantic clutch of Dolgonóghi. The little Consul sprawled on the green cloth and received a sounding smack on his shining brow. The company screamed with laughter.

"Look out, Feathers!" cried Vanderlyn. "Remember that a kiss is followed by a blow!"

But Arcadius merely got Fethersbee's head in chancery and put the liqueur to the protesting lips. The Consul had to drink or choke. When released he scrambled down in disgust, mopping his outraged forehead.

"Vot you fazzer name, Sir Fezzersbee?" demanded Dolgonóghi, affably. "Ya vish name you Roosky fashion. Moy fazzer Matvié. Moy name Aracadý Matviévich. You say?"

"I'll be damned if I do!" quoth the irate Consul, who had never been heard to swear.

Arcadius turned, as usual, to Vanderlyn for information.

"Vot him fazzer name?"

"It must have been Gun. You see he is such a son of a gun!"

"Horoshó! Googe! Gun — zat Ruzhyó. Son — zat vich. Ruzhyó-vich! Vot himself name?"

"My name is Octavius, Mr. Dolgonóghi," interposed Fethersbee, with dignity.

"Horoshó! Googe! Octavy Ruzhyóvich, moy freend foryever!"

The conviviality continued until Arcadius collapsed after nearly emptying a bottle of curaçao. Vanderlyn packed him into a Chinese coal basket, and he was carried home on a pole suspended between two coolies.

Although nominally out of work, Dolgonóghi still drew his salary, for the mine was really the Tsar's property, and dividends did not matter. The port of Liao-kow was frozen for three months of the year, so that steamers could not approach and mails were sent by overland courier. Arcadius hired a Chinese house on the outskirts of the settlement and furnished it with stock that had long cumbered the local storekeepers. There were, among this collection, a gaudy Swiss clock that played Chinese tunes every hour, an American harmonium, a baby carriage, a dozen German chromos in gilt frames and a black walnut parlor suite upholstered in red plush. His hospitality was lavish. The smaller foreign communities in China are socially divided into two cliques, generally known as A and B. To the former belong officials, wholesale merchants, the doctor and a stray Anglican missionary. To the latter are relegated ships' officers, storekeepers, tide-waiters and evangelical missionaries. The ladies of clique A, although jealous of one another, are not on visiting terms with the women of clique B. The dinner parties of clique A are arranged strictly by precedence, the senior consul occupying the seat at the right hand of the hostess, while the junior mercantile clerk is far down the board. Such banquets need import no Egyptian skeleton to check their gaiety. After the guests are reassembled in the drawing-room the eldest lady is asked to sing, and

usually responds with "In the Gloaming" or "Love's Old, Sweet Song." The youngest gentleman follows with a recitation of some Kipling ballad in glorification of Thomas Atkins. The rest of the evening is devoted to the insipid parlor games so dear to English hearts. When everybody has been decently bored the gentlemen are consoled with Scotch and soda, and the function is over.

But the feasts of Arcadius set all etiquette at defiance. They began at unheard of hours, and were interminable. There was more to eat and drink at the sideboard than at the table itself. Dolgonóghi was no respecter of persons. He would invite anybody and submit to no refusal. Fethersbee at first resisted, but was privately warned that the Russian was coming for him with the perambulator, and hurried to the house on foot at three in the afternoon. He found a mixed company, consisting of a French bishop *in partibus infidelium*, a Presbyterian Bible agent, the Japanese vice-consul, his own consular constable's family, the bartender of the hotel and others of clique B.

"Ah, Octavy Ruzhyóvich!" exclaimed Arcadius, clasping the little man to his broad breast and kissing him on both cheeks. "Better nyever late to mend," say English proverb. You drink? Have *zakouska*!"

Fethersbee passed a wretched afternoon and evening. He had to drink strong waters with his food and smoke black cigarettes between the courses. Dolgonóghi could sing and accompany himself at the harmonium. They were melancholy Russian songs in a minor key that he sang, but he had a superb voice, and the passion with which he rendered them was quite infectious. When Chinese singing girls with their guitars came in at dessert, the Presbyterian *colporteur* and the ladies escaped, but the Jesuit ecclesiastic remained, with his placid, observant smile. Fethersbee made a movement toward the door, but Dolgonóghi anticipated him, and locked it. Finally, when ill and exhausted, though quite

sober, the British Consul was called on to return thanks for a toast to the Queen. He rose, but his legs refused to support him and his tongue to utter the stereotyped sentiments.

"I cannot! I cannot!" he mumbled.

"But moy googe freend, you Kveen's helt! Speech, Octavy Ruzhyóvich!"

"Speech, speech, Mr. Fethersbee!" echoed clique B, delighted at getting the Consul for a boon companion.

"I cannot!" repeated the miserable official.

Dolgonóghi took offense. "You Kveen moy Tsarina grandmozzer. If not speech Kveen, shall speech grandmozzer! Moy feeling hurt!"

But the room suddenly swam before Fethersbee's eyes, and he sank back unconscious. It was a weird procession that fared from the house of Arcadius to that of Octavius. The Consul was fast asleep in the perambulator, that was pushed swiftly along the muddy ruts of the Bund by the huge figure of Dolgonóghi, who chanted a wild Slavonic melody. They were escorted by the men of clique B, shouting and brandishing Chinese lanterns. When the Consular gate was reached, Arcadius delivered his cargo to the porter, and the escort sang "God Save the Queen."

Miss Violet Grey was governess in the family of the Commissioner of Customs. She had seen her thirtieth birthday, and was not beautiful, but she had Mrs. Browning's sonnets by heart. If a white man is stationed long enough at a small place in the Far East he will end by marrying almost anything in sight, but Miss Grey had netted nobody. Arcadius Dolgonóghi came to call, and she immediately fell in love. He was such a magnificent specimen of manhood, so masterful, passionate and romantic, and not too young. He was actually twenty-eight, but looked five years older, with his brown whiskers. He squeezed her hand at a stiff dinner party until the tears came to her eyes, which made his hound-like orbs fill also.

"Mees Grey, vot you fazzer name?" he inquired, earnestly.

"J-J-John J-J-James," stammered the governess.

"Vot youself name?"

"Violet."

"*Horoshó!* Jone—zat Ivan. Violet—one flower—zat *fálka*. Ya name you *Fiálka Ivanovna*. Moy name Arcady Matviévich."

Miss Grey blushed. She had never received such advances from a man. The stupid dinner party vanished, and she dreamed of a sleigh ride by moonlight with Arcadius. They were whirling across a vast white plain, and she was wrapped partly in furs and partly in the strong right arm of Dolgonóghi. The dream was, unfortunately, interrupted by the Commissioner's wife, who rose to withdraw and leave her male guests to their tobacco.

"Well, Miss Grey, aren't you coming? or is Mr. Dolgonóghi going to teach you to smoke?"

"Stay, *Fiálka Ivanovna*, please stay viz moy. Ya give you Roosky cigarette. *Horoshó!*"

"Another time—when we are alone!" murmured the young woman.

The attentions of Arcadius to Violet became a standing joke in the port. He walked with her, taught her—on the sly—to smoke cigarettes, to ride half-broken Tartar ponies on the plain and to skate on the frozen river. He tried to initiate her into the mysteries of the Russian language; but an alphabet that chiefly contains diphthongs and double consonants proved to be too much even for an amorous pupil, from whom, however, he learned to speak more intelligible English, and whom he plied with Muscovite confectionery and Manchurian furs.

In the early Spring she began to look anxious. He had not said anything definite, and had restricted his caresses to her hands. Mrs. Bartow, the Commissioner's wife, while not unwilling to aid her governess in obtaining a matrimonial situation, thought it right to put an end to a mere flirtation.

"My dear Miss Grey," she said, kindly, "you are under my protection here, as I promised your mother you should be. I should fail in my duty if I were to allow Mr. Dolgonóghi to amuse himself at your expense. Are you engaged to him?"

The governess, on the verge of tears, admitted that she was not.

"Then why does he come for you every day? I do not grudge your time, but I really must speak to Mr. Dolgonóghi."

"Oh, please don't! He is very high-tempered and would never come again."

Mrs. Bartow laughed. "Wouldn't he, if he were in earnest? Where is your feminine intuition? If I barricaded the house I could not keep him out."

"I shall surely know this week," said Miss Grey, desperately.

"Very well. I hope you may not be disappointed in him. But I have myself undergone so much of his platonics that I should not be surprised to hear that he had left a wife in Russia."

Violet Grey was shocked at this suggestion and went out into the March air to brace her nerves. As she stepped on the Bund she met Arcadius, looking very impressive in his tall Astrakhan cap and trimmed overcoat.

"Good-morning, *Fiálka Ivanovna* I coming for see you."

"That is your usual pastime, is it not?" demanded the governess, sharply.

"My happiness. Life is sorry in Liao-kow. You are my stone-load."

"If you mean a mill-stone about your neck, why don't you throw it off?"

"No, no! I mean magnet. You draw me like stone-load draw needle."

"A needle is not safe to play with. I think I will leave it alone in future."

"What for, *Fiálka Ivanovna*? My feelings are very warm to you."

"Have you not rather cheap feelings? You advertise them so much that their quality cannot be of the best."

"Good bird need not bush," say English proverb. You are cross. What for? Zis is Rossian Easter Day. Not must be cross. Tell me 'Christ is rose.'"

The governess proved stronger than the woman. "Christ is risen," she corrected. He bent forward and kissed her forehead, saying, "He was risen indeed."

She glanced around to see whether there were witnesses, but only a few natives were on the Bund.

"You had better go and speak to Mrs. Bartow."

"I will speak. Is she to home?"

"I have just left her."

"Wait to me, please."

He looked so wistful and handsome as he entered the Commissioner's house that she felt suddenly happy and confident. But he emerged in a few moments with an air both perplexed and annoyed.

"Mrs. Bartow very cross. She tell me go away, not come back no more."

"Why, what did you say to her?"

"I tell her it is Rossian Easter. She must tell me 'Christ is risen.' She tell me. I kiss her. She not like, say tell her husband. I say 'Tell him, I kiss too him.' She say, 'Go away! get out!'"

"You are a brute, and I hate you."

"What for, Fiálka Ivanóvna?"

"You would kiss anybody. Why, she is forty if she is a day! Did you tell her that you had just kissed me?"

"No. What for?"

Violet stamped her foot and rushed indoors, where she locked herself in her room and found relief in tears. Arcadius walked sadly to the club, where he was unusually emotional, drank maraschino from a tumbler, and gave everybody an affectionate Easter greeting.

For several weeks he saw nothing of Miss Grey. She would not stir from the house, but devoted herself to her pupils. This kept her imagination off the sleigh ride. But the days were dreary without Arcadius, and she grew dyspeptic for lack of exercise. Then a note was handed

to her which proved to be from him, and read as follows:

FIÁLKA IVANÓVNA GREY.

DEAR—I wish for see you. Not can come house. I wish make propose for you. Where can meet to you? Please come walk Bund to day 5 of clock.

Your
ARCADY MATVIÉVICH DOLGONÓGHI.

She burned the note, with a sigh. Mrs. Bartow and her husband were riding bicycles on the plain. At a quarter past five, while she was having afternoon tea in the nursery with the children, the Chinese butler brought a card to the nursery, and close behind him came its owner, Arcadius, beaming, with his hands full of parcels. There were caramels and walnut paste for the children, who were kissed and bribed to go into the garden. Violet was severely dignified.

"Mrs. Bartow is out," she said, "and I was not receiving."

"Pardon, Fiálka Ivanóvna. You not answer at my letter. 'Silence is gold consent,' say English proverb. I hurry. You not happy. I make propose for you."

Here he took her hand and retained it while seating himself. Miss Grey stood limply looking out of the window.

"I go home for Rossia when port open. I go first steamer for Shanghai. How much Mrs. Bartow pay you?"

The governess winced and tried to disengage her hand.

"What business is it of yours, Mr. Dolgonóghi?"

"My business quite all right, Fiálka Ivanóvna. I pay you plenty more zan her. You go for Rossia wiz me."

She became quite faint. "I do not understand you, Mr. Dolgonóghi."

He fumbled in the pocket of his overcoat.

"You loave children. I loave, too. I have. Zey not speak English. I get letter of my wife. She wish governess. See at picture."

He released her hand and finally produced the photograph of a handsome but anemic blonde, with three small boys who were images of himself. He kissed the picture and offered it to Miss Grey, who suddenly regained her calmness and examined it with indifference.

"You must have married young," was her remark.

"I marry twenty-one. I have twenty-eight. My wife very good, very pious. She nobleman daughter. My fazzer meat merchant at Tver. She leave me. Her fazzer say 'No!' She run away wiz me in sleigh. Long way, very cold; plenty wolf. Horse fall down, sleigh stop. What I make? I kill, I kill!"

Violet shuddered. How often had he committed murder and matrimony?

"I very strong. Pistol empty. I have big whip. I kill one, two, three, four wolf. Ozzer wolf eat zemself, eat horse. I take wife at shoulder. I run one, two, three, four mile for village."

Miss Grey was thrilled, in spite of herself.

"You must be very strong."

"My fazzer more strong zan me. He meat merchant. He kill buck—what English name, bull?—wiz fist!"

"Your wife does not look strong."

"Not strong. She not can forget wolf. Lie down, plenty lie down. Not take care children. I leave her very. She wish English governess. I wish you go for her. She leave you."

"I cannot leave Mrs. Bartow, Mr. Dolgonóghi. My engagement is not completed, and I fear, besides, that I should not like Russia."

"Not like? You leave Rossia! My wife make you leave. Come wiz me."

At this point Mr. and Mrs. Bartow entered the room. Of course they were startled, but Miss Grey was equal to the occasion.

"Mr. Dolgonóghi has just asked me to go with him to Russia to take care of his invalid wife and teach his children. I have declined, with thanks."

Mrs. Bartow at length recovered her breath.

"I should think so, indeed, my dear! Why, Mr. Dolgonóghi, you can get scores of English governesses in Europe without robbing me of mine."

"But my wife not leave zem. I know she leave Fiálka Ivanóvna."

The Commissioner's wife concealed a smile that was, perhaps, no compliment to Violet. But peace was restored, and Arcadius was invited to stay and dine. As usual, he wiped his mouth on the tablecloth.

A fortnight later he left for Shanghai. He took an affectionate but respectful leave of Miss Grey, though his last minutes in Liao-kow were spent at the club, weeping on the necks of his acquaintances, especially the shrinking Fethersbee.

"Octavy Ruzhyóvich," he sobbed, "you not forget! Not all forget! Rossia long way. Rossia not freend wiz England. Zey not understand zemself. But you my googe freend!"

And he kissed the little Consul squarely on the mouth. He was finally carried on board his steamer, after numberless glasses of cognac, chartreuse and green mint.

If Fethersbee forgot, Violet Grey did not. She had met her ideal in the flesh, and it seemed unattainable. But who feels the subtle finger touch of Fate? A year later she received a pathetic letter from Arcadius, wherein he told her of his wife's death from consumption soon after his arrival, leaving him with a big country house and three boys who were running wild. Their mother's family was too proud to take them and Arcadius into the bargain. The family influence had procured the butcher's son his Manchurian post, and his safe return had been unwelcome. The letter enclosed a large cheque, and begged "Fiálka Ivanóvna" to marry the writer and rule his household. He offered to come across Siberia, if necessary, to fetch her.

Mrs. Bartow cynically observed that there might be many a landslip betwixt Tver and Liao-kow. But Violet Grey did not hesitate. She

went at once, and she is perfectly happy with her great barbarian husband. She has one little girl, and her husband's boys adore their step-

mother. She has made him a teetotaler, but it is said that she has never quite succeeded in keeping the kisses of Arcady to herself.



AT THE TELEPHONE

“**Y**ES, this is 244; yes, this is Miss Jennings. . . . Oh, how do you do? . . . Very well, thank you. . . . I beg your pardon! I am afraid you forgot yourself. What did you say? Oh—well, really I—I . . . Very busy; in fact, my time is precious; I have none at all to waste. . . . Well—perhaps a few minutes. . . . Really, it is quite immaterial to me. . . . No; I think not. . . . In fact, I am sure of it. . . . No—no—you must not. . . . I forbid you, really. . . . Oh, of course, it is not impossible. . . . I might not be out, you know. . . . I said I might not be out. . . . O—u—t, out. . . . I guess the connection is poor; we never do understand each other, you know. . . . Well, don’t blame everything on Central; perhaps you—or I—are to blame some. I only said the connection might be poor; we all have poor connections, you know. . . . No, I said ‘out’—yes, I hear almost everything you say. I always have understood you better than you do me. . . . What is the matter? . . . Can’t understand? . . . I only said that if you called I might not be out, after all. . . . No—‘not be out.’ . . . I might not. . . . No—not ‘be out,’ but ‘might not be out.’ . . . Isn’t it funny? . . . You can’t hear a word? I guess she’s cutting us off. Hello! hello! Oh, is it you? Yes, 244. . . . I would much rather, though, be number 1. . . . Well—perhaps—on conditions. . . . No, quite impossible; I could not trust you. . . . N—o, I must ring off now; good-bye. . . . I said ‘good-bye.’ . . . No, not good boy—good-bye. . . . Yes, I really must. . . . Indeed I must. . . . Well, I really oughtn’t to. . . . I do forgive you, too. . . . Oh, did you really think I was to blame? Hello! hello—I thought we were cut off sure, then. Yes, perhaps I was, too—a little. . . . I am willing to, over the ‘phone. . . . I said over the ‘phone. . . . Yes, kiss and make up—over the ‘phone. . . . As the children do—no! never! only children, you know. . . . I positively can’t see you. . . . N—o, not so very busy. . . . Yes—I—do like you—some. . . . Oh, I couldn’t. . . . No, never. . . . Perhaps, sometime. . . . Oh, no—no, indeed. . . . Well—I don’t know. . . . I said I didn’t know. . . . Of course, I do know. . . . Well—perhaps. . . . Oh—I couldn’t. . . . Well, yes, I could, of course. . . . I—do—mean it—too. . . . Really? . . . Perhaps—yes. . . . Well, ‘yes,’ then. . . .”

LUE ELLEN TETERS.



THE PLAIN INFERENCE

MABEL—I wouldn’t marry the best man in the world.

CARRIE—You must be engaged to some fellow who has money.

THE SEA-VOICE

BEYOND the sands I hear the sea-voice calling
 With passion all but human in its pain,
 While from my eyes the bitter tears are falling,
 And all the Summer land seems blind with rain;
 For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
 She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
 A smile upon her dear lips, dumb but waiting,
 And I—I hear the sea-voice calling me.

The tide comes in. The moonlit flood and glory
 Of that unresting surge thrill earth with bliss,
 And I can hear the passionate, sweet story
 Of waves that waited round her for her kiss.
 Sweetheart, they love you—silent and unseeing;
 Old ocean holds his court around you there,
 And while I reach out through the dark to find you
 His fingers twine the seaweed in your hair.

The tide goes out, and in the dawn's new splendor
 The dreams of dark first fade, then pass away;
 And I awake from visions soft and tender
 To face the shuddering agony of day.
 For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
 She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
 A smile upon her dear lips, dumb but waiting,
 And I—I hear the sea-voice calling me.

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



THE SECRET OUT

SHE—Why is it men so seldom marry their first love?
 HE—Because, I suppose, it is so much more fun to marry some other fellow's first love.



FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS

WASHINGTON blazes on his horse
 Against the black, black night,
 Because in the country's darkest day
 He was its brightest light.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

A LOST LINE

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

AS the Contessina trailed her languid airs—thus the Contessa, her terrible mother-in-law, called them—up the Cascine walk, the passer-by, who met her daily, noticed that she was sad.

A pretty, *chic* woman's melancholy is cause for question; if occupying, it is rarely convincing. After all, "to be" is the essential; the Contessina *was*. There were those who thought it enough.

About many persons there is an element of the *décosu*; they seem constructed of shreds and patches; their attributes, like their moods, do not hang together—touch, but do not adhere. One felt with this particular lady a sense of finish, of completion, of fitness; she said and did no slovenly things; her harmonious manner struck one as a gift. Manners, no doubt, can be developed, but there is a grace that springs only from an engaging personality; its forced imitations produce discomfort.

Her compatriots said of the Contessina that she was very "foreign," while the Italians looked on her with that indulgence with which we approach a rare flower successfully transplanted. She therefore held the allurement of exoticism in her own and her adopted country. At eighteen, during a Winter sojourn in Florence, she had met and married her Count. She had made the Palazzo Grazia her home ever since. She occupied her *étage* alone. Her husband had died some years before—with his idle habits, perfect good humor and exacting demands on her American income. He passed the

larger part of his time standing at the doors of his club, twirling his mustache, gaping at the pretty American and English women who stop at Doney's or Giacosa's to take tea and eat little cakes—ladies at whom the Florentine dames glance with a mixture of haughtiness and envy, raising their lorgnons as they pass in their gay equipages.

The Cascine presented its usual appearance on this particular Spring morning. Showers had washed its damp, dark paths, and the tiny stones of the gravel sparkled as if spangled with jewels. Handsome officers, brave in their smartly fitting uniforms, pranced on the horseback trail; pretty misses and matrons smiled at them as they galloped by, escorted by husbands and brothers, or followed by breeched and booted grooms. The Princess Platoff's fat coachman and horses were drawn up as usual in a shady angle, while she plodded to the Piazzone with praiseworthy energy. A pale, red-lipped *horizontale* dragged her skirts with a "swish" over the moist earth, calling to her *cocchiere* to meet her a mile further, at the monument of the Rajah of Kohlapore. The Viale del Re was almost deserted, except for half a dozen private broughams and victorias and their occupants. The indefatigable tourist was also out in his cab; but it is the later afternoon hour that brings the crowd. Here and there a bicyclist clove the wind, whirled quickly through the leafy shade. From silent crypts the plant world had burst into bloom. The night flowers were spreading their petals to

the sunlight, from which flew away such insects as love the dusk. The rhythmic pulses of the Spring beat in the young woman's heart.

Just because others rode their horses or their bicycles, or lay back lazily in carriages, she chose to walk; although when the desire or fever was on her she, too, loved the mad-cap run to the rally hunt, and to spin her wheel among the hills. Yes, she was sad—as sad as if it were a Summerless polar sea about her instead of this eternal festa of bird song, beauty and warmth.

Her little truffle-nosed dog ambled behind her, held in his long, loose leather leash, tortured into harness and muzzle. As she walked she heard the rumble of wheels behind her, and from out a small coupé a gentleman sprang. "Sprang" is a strong word. The Prince, albeit robust, was not exactly agile. He was an elderly man, quite old enough to be the Contessina's father. He was dressed with scrupulous elegance, and wore violets in his buttonhole. The meeting was cordial. He swung himself into her slow step. She expected the usual reproaches. Why did she make him ridiculous? Why did she humiliate him? To all Italian vanity exists this one terror—to become absurd to the looker on. He has gauged the curiosity and sarcastic humor of his nation. He has not yet recognized that no one can make us ridiculous but ourselves.

To the unsophisticated, declamation is eloquence, gesture emphasis, hysteria emotion. In Italy one meets the real things. The dramatic is not an acquired trick, but an instinct of the blood. Generally, as he spoke, the Prince waved his hands, his entire body vibrated, while the words fell quickly from his lips; but to-day he appeared calmer, colder, more silent. He was a Roman noble. He had pursued her with his passion now for two years. Why did the Contessina, on her part, meet him on this sweet morning with the Arno's tide at their side and the rustling foliage over them, less indifferently than usual?

Returning from the opera late and sleepy, she had nevertheless not neglected those nightly rites of all women who respect their loveliness. She had plunged into her perfumed bath, been rolled in soft flannels and rubbed by her hand-maidens; her brown hair had been combed and shaken; sweet smelling creams had been lightly daubed on her cheeks; her hands and nails had then been cared for; also her gleaming little teeth; and all wrapped in her down *peignoir*, she had drunk a cup of warm milk at her bedside. Then her women had left her.

She had felt restless and wide awake again with the flush and stir of her ablutions. She had drawn to her toilette table, sat down before it, raised the crystallamp and looked at herself. Her eyes became fastened on one particular portion of her face—her chin. From this they wandered to the contour of her throat. They gloomed. Even the Contessa, her detested mother-in-law, had always admired her throat and chin. Their line had been, perhaps, the younger woman's essential claim to beauty. Could it be a shade across the mirror that affected her own vision, or was she—withering? That suave sweep—where was it to-night? There could be no doubt of it; the lower half of her face was thickening, squaring a little, was less firm, a trifle worn. She had never noticed this before. She fell a-wondering if others had—other women.

Tolstoi tells us this carcass is but a spade we should be glad to destroy in digging to reach the hidden spark of the spirit. In certain moods we are commendably inclined to agree with him; yet, alas! the fact remains that, given our present crude civilization, religion, whether viewed as a large idea or a private consolation, offers a woman little balm for the loss of her youth and personal charm. This loss remains one of the greatest tragedies of life—a tragedy none the less terrible because met in silence and accepted with smiles.

To the Contessina, who loved all

beauty, her own was dear. She shivered.

One thing was certain. The Prince, who had sat close to her in her *loge* the night before, had particularly complimented her on her shoulders as they rose from the severity of her pink velvet gown. His eyes had dwelt complacently for a moment on the tip of her little ear, to wander to where it met the curve of her proud cheek. Had he—seen? She had slept, and dreamed, and forgotten. But on rising early she had made another examination, and now she was—sure. She was changing! With this poignant discovery clutching her heart she had come forth to meet the day.

The Prince was not feeling amiable. His estates had failed to bring in their usual semi-annual revenue; so his intendant wrote to him. He half-suspected the man of lying. The crops had been excellent, the olives abundant, the straw-pleating had flourished—why, then, was the income diminished? The explanations were incoherent and feeble; the master felt justly suspicious and indignant. Possibly younger men know no such distractions to the pains of love. But this gentleman was not young, and his disposition of mind threatened complication. The lassitude of a sleepless night, nay, possibly of his years, lay on him. Once, indeed, when the Contessina addressed him his attention was wandering. The young woman noted this with peculiar anxiety. It was the first time in all her life that she had spoken to any man whose eyes had moved away from her lips as she did so. The first time! And this was the slave, the dog she had amused herself treading on and had made the butt of her railleries for all these months! He must have seen! A sense of cold crept over her, and she pushed up the fluff of lace that encircled her neck. She reflected that in street costumes, at least, she might still be passable. She set traps for him.

“What did you think of La Favola’s

figure? Is she not too stout?” The Prince had not remarked the diva’s *embonpoint*—*du reste*, she was not his style; he did not admire her.

“Do you think she would look better if she wore one of those modern jeweled collars, instead of appearing *la gorge nue*? ”

He was not deeply interested in the question. Then, desperately, she asked him how he had liked her own pink frock. Still reflecting on his steward’s perfidy, the Prince answered in vague terms of gallantry, a perfunctory assurance that left her uneasy.

“You thought, then,” she persisted, lightly tapping the gravel with her parasol, “that I was *en beauté* last night—really?”

He stopped, smiling into her eyes.

“Always beautiful to me.”

“And so—without ornaments, without my pearls, as I was? Like a young girl? My throat . . . ”

He liked her pearls, yes, still—she was *bellissima* with or without them.

They paused and sat down where the pyramidal fountain hides under the black trees the record of a lover’s fate:

*Eterno monumento in questo loco
Generosa pietà fonde a Narciso
Che vaggiando al Fonte il proprio viso
Mori consunto d’amoroso fuoco.*

She watched him closely—the fine, bony structure of the brow and nose, so common to well-born Italians. The mouth, once so perfect, still sweet under its waxed mustache, with that strange sweetness which defies the accidents of change, the blight of years; the grizzly, close-cropped hair and those kindly eyes, that melted into softness when they gazed at her. How often had he told her that he owed her the debt no life is long enough to pay, because she had given him back his youth—his youth, and its lost dream! And she had laughed and clapped her hands, and he had caught them in his own, kissing them, calling her “my little girl,” and she

had felt the abyss between them of the years that separate. To-day, somehow, the distance seemed far less. She examined the network of wrinkles at his temples and beneath his eyes, marked that when he laughed it could be seen one of his fine teeth was missing, noted that his cheeks were worn and lined. And these signs of age in him that she had so disliked, and even ridiculed, suddenly struck her with a profound pathos; a curious wish to weep, and weep, and weep, folded closely in his arms just for a moment, for the first time invaded her. Yet never had he seemed less ardent. The reserve that the public promenade imposed seemed to chill him into a certain severity of attitude, that strict convention with which the Florentine protects a woman's reputation, even when trifling with her honor. To this adorer the Contessina's honor was as dear as her good name.

She wished he would clasp her hand a moment where it lay idly on her knee, for they were quite alone ex-

cept for a workman stretched sleeping on one of the stone benches. But he went on sucking the end of his cane, absent-minded, irritable.

"Are you going to the ball at the Corsini's?"

"Yes, if you are."

"Ah, I am getting too *passle* for balls!"

He stared. "You?—*passle*?"

Unexpectedly her eyes filled. "Yes, really, really. I think I shall hereafter abjure décolleté."

All distraction had fled now. He leaned suddenly forward and touched her chin with his gloved finger.

"What! *carina*, hide that exquisite little throat from the eyes of your poor old lover? become a nun?" he laughed. "Ah!" She gave a cry, her head rolled back against the dark tree trunk.

"Ah, Carl, dearest, dearest Carl, I *love* you!"

He sat speechless—dazed with his ecstasy, staring at her, astonished, humbled.

He never understood.



LIFE'S MASQUERADE

YOUTH cried, "Ah, Life, it breaks my heart to gaze
Into thy face, and find thee—what thou art!
I fondly dreamed while still thou playedst thy part
In mask and cloak, in this great play of plays—
Seeing thee through the dim, delicious haze
Of hope and happiness—that my young heart
Would be unsatisfied till power to start
Thee from thy gay disguise were mine. As prays
The little child, half-lisping, on his knee
For manhood's strength and manhood's unknown power,
So prayed I, Life of mine, to see thy face,
And thou hast turned at last—God pity me!—
Without thy mask, and in this one brief hour
I loathe thee as I stand in thy embrace!"

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



SINCERE SYMPATHY

HE—I'm not living with my father-in-law any more.
SHE—Well, I don't blame him.

MRS. MAITLAND'S CORRESPONDENT

By Jane Brevoort Eddy

June, 19—.

MY DEAR MRS. MAITLAND: At last we are settled in our new home in this remote village, and thanks to your kindness, we are very comfortable. Mother hated so much to trouble you with those final bills which you were so good as to *insist* on paying for her. She said, however, that since she came here solely because you advised it, and you knew just how she was situated, she could permit you to do so and yet hold up her head. You knew that what money we had was all used up in our necessary expenses in moving and our daily wants, for none of those mean tradespeople would trust us for anything. That hateful butcher, with whom we traded for years, sent in last year's account six times; and the grocer, who knew dear papa, who had paid him thousands of dollars, persecuted us up to the last minute. When he couldn't get a cent out of us, then he went to you.

Do you know, dear Mrs. Maitland, that we are afraid the old washerwoman that you are now employing is not at all a nice person? She has done our laundry work for years, and, of course, we paid her regularly until six months ago. When we were coming away mamma gave her quite a nice cambric gown. It was a faded old thing, to be sure, that mamma couldn't wear, but it was worth something to old Ann, and I think she was so horrid to go and tell you that we hadn't paid her all Winter. Mamma felt so ashamed!

I am beginning to feel that all poor people—tradesmen and workpeople, I mean—haven't any feeling. Mam-

ma says they fatten on the rich, and really that is just what they do.

But I must stop this tirade and tell you about the house you were so good as to hunt out for us. Mamma says she feels less lonely when she remembers that you own it, and that it helps to reconcile her to living away off here. You said yourself it was but a plain cottage—built for your gardener, wasn't it?—but it is on the main road to the village, and we thought that would take away the terribly, terribly lonely feeling we have whenever we recall that we are living in the country and know nobody.

Mamma thinks it queer that not a soul has come to call on us, but perhaps it is just as well as long as we are to live so plainly. Still, you know, one does want to speak to somebody, and it was so different in New York. Who would dream that only seventy-five miles could bring us into such a wilderness! *There*, no matter where or how you live, you can go out and see people. I think again and again with delight of the tea you sent me to in your gray crepon. That dollar I had kept to give to Ann I spent on two roses, and they looked so lovely I couldn't feel sorry for Ann, who was in the dumps because I had promised her a dollar toward her rent. But there, one doesn't go to a tea every day, and as you were so kind as to send me, you were responsible for it, my dear friend (I love to call you that!) and so, after all, it wasn't so dreadful that you had to pay Ann in the end; it was a sort of just debt, wasn't it?

What wouldn't I give if you could

only see mamma now, sitting in "the wreck"—that's what I call our parlor, for you know half of our furniture, which you were so kind as to send out to us prepaid by freight, came to pieces. Mamma likes the old stuff because it shows we've had "a family," and so she sits, and cries and glues alternately. It looks horrid now, but maybe we can fix it up. Mamma snooped in the closet at the big house, where you told her some things were stored away that we might make use of, and found an old Turkey rug that she spread over the sofa. It is worn, but the colors are rich, and the curtains are not half so bad as we thought them, now that they are hung. But she says: "Please tell dear Mrs. Maitland—" you know mamma loves you so—"to think how it must seem to *me* to be living here in this poky country place, in this mechanic's cottage, and to feel that I must count every penny, and then she'll pity me, for after all's said and done, she got me to come here."

Mamma and I both feel that it was wise, for it will be cheaper than living in New York. There is much less opportunity to spend money, *only*—and this is such a big *only*—as one has nothing to think of to break up the day but just trying, trying, *trying* to make this place look decent if anyone *should* call, and getting one's meals, it's pretty hard to have nothing—nothing whatever—to fix up with.

The pictures you said were piled on the shelves we hunted out, and now they give quite an air to our "best room." Mamma says she would like chromos better, because when the room is darkened they sometimes look like oil paintings if the frames are handsome, but I laugh at her, for of course I know that you wouldn't give us chromos with handsome gold frames—you'd want those yourself—and the dirty old gilt frames look worse than anything. I think these engravings have a more artistic and literary look, like you—I intend this for a compliment—because they are so dull and gray; I should say *quiet*, but I mean

dull *in appearance*, and then are so full of goodness inside, just as you are. I see that they are engravings of Turner's pictures, and I feel sure, because they have that *woozy* look, that people will think they give the room tone.

To go back to mamma's message to you, she says: "Tell her that I sit here amid the ruins of my Lares and Penates—" good heavens!—"and I know that she won't think me grasping, after all she has done for me, if I ask her to send me a roll of matting—two, if it is not asking too much. She need not get anything handsome, but I should like one of those new, large plaid, green patterns—they give so much more style to a room. If she cannot get a dark green, blue will serve. Then, I think that there is only one thing more, and that is brasses for the big open fireplace."

As people furnish now, dearest, brass gives more effect than anything else. You will think that mamma is a regular imposition to ask for all this, after what you have already done for us, but she says she's sure you'll understand, because you know that *ladies* must have things. The big fireplace is perfectly empty and all black with smoke. It looks perfectly awful—like a tomb. Mamma says she'll be much obliged.

And now I am done with begging, my dear, dear Mrs. Maitland. But there's one thing I want you to do for *me*—just me, myself. It's a great big thing, and I'd never have the courage to ask for it as a gift, but the way I'll arrange it you'll see how different it is, and how necessary. You know you said I must give music lessons, and how in the world can I do it without a piano? You said that I must go to my pupils at their homes, but I never could walk from one house to another, and it would cost as much for carriage hire as for a piano. Besides, if the pupils come to me and take their lessons on my piano, then I can practice on it and improve myself.

I feel sure that I can soon earn enough to pay for one, and all that I ask from you is to pay the first cost,

and let me refund it in small sums as I am able. I will begin to teach just as soon as I can get any pupils. It will be so much better for me to owe you the money than to rent a piano and allow the rent to go toward the purchase.

I had a friend who tried to buy a piano on the instalment plan, and after she had paid the rent for a year and a half she found that there was still as much to pay as if it were a new piano, and it was two years old and getting decidedly second-rate in tone. It wasn't a very good piano, anyway, but such a one would be good enough for me—all I should expect, for I should never have the presumption to suggest your getting me a very high-priced one. I should try to scold you if such an idea entered your head in spite of what I say, for you know how I *love* a fine piano, and what my music is to me, and it would be just like you to go and order the best there is for me.

Mamma says that I am wasting all my time writing you such a screed, that I am a lazy girl, and that it will bore you. But I know that you will bear with me, because you feel so sorry for us.

I still have to thank you for that last little gift you made me. It was too sweet, the way you did it! I opened the box of chocolates on the train, and when I saw your note in the top I cried out: "Why, mamma, what can Mrs. Maitland be writing to me about? I said good-bye to her yesterday, when she gave me this." I tore open the note, and then, I tell you, I felt like a girl who has been kissed (please don't think me horrid because I said that—it's only a joke) when I saw a ten-dollar bill folded in among the leaves of your pretty note paper! The very first money I earn I am going to use to get some note paper just like yours. So you know now how much I admire it.

You will think me very mercenary, but I must tell you in confidence that if I could marry as rich a man as your husband I'd take anybody—any old thing.

Your devoted, ever loving

LILY.

II

August.

MY DEAREST MRS. MAITLAND:

What have you thought of me—*naughty me!*—when you did not hear from me for a whole month? But you will understand when I tell you all. I never mean to keep back anything from you, for you have done so much for us, and we never could have got along even as well as we have but for you.

Mamma says that she thinks ever so much more of your thoughtfulness than of your generosity, for you are so rich that you can give without any self-denial. It must be lovely to be so rich! You have everything that you want, and the few things that I make such a fuss about are only like the scraps from the rich man's table to you.

I am so much younger than mamma that I can't look at it just her way. I suppose we change as we get older. I am just as devoted to you as I can be, and I think you were awfully good to send me the piano. That was six weeks ago, and I have meant to write to you every day since to tell you about it, but—things have happened.

In the first place, I'll make my little confession. And try not to think I'm horrid, for I'm sure you'd rather have me truthful and honest about it than to have me flatter you by telling you I was altogether pleased.

Of course the piano is useful to have, and I know it was a good deal for you to send me, although it was an old-fashioned one of your own that you had left up here—not at all like the lovely grand you have in the city. But what I wanted was a piano of my own—a fine modern one in a curly-maple case, but I knew that I ought not to expect anything more stylish than a rosewood case, and mamma told me beforehand that she should begrudge every penny you spent on it, and she'd much rather have a big rug for the front hall and for the dining-room.

Poor mamma! she can't get used to matting in the dining-room. She says

that she feels like a dressmaker every time she enters it for a meal. Do dressmakers have matting in their dining-rooms? I never noticed, if I ever was in one.

Revenons nous à notre piano—old proverb! Then I was mad at mamma for talking so selfishly, and I said, “If Mrs. Maitland sends me a piano of any kind I shall be both delighted and surprised, and you had better be, too, mamma, for remember that it means our bread and butter, which I am to earn.”

I spoke very earnestly, for I was terribly afraid she might write to you and tell you how she felt. I must have said something about wanting a maple one, for mamma is such a tease, and just as she always will when I am put to the blush, she laughed right out when the old square piano, with the mahogany case, marched in from the big house.

Your man was too funny for anything as he placed the old high-backed tapestry window chair in front of it, and said: “I hed pertikeler orders, ma’am, to bring de shtool wid it, an’ dere dey bote is, an’ Missis Maitland’s complyments, an’ here’s de bit of silk for de top deecoration, ma’am.”

The silk was beautiful to spread over the old-fashioned case, which really does look most unsightly in our little room, but I am very much obliged to you all the same.

Perhaps I shall have to thank you in the end for much more than the old piano, for it has surely brought me luck. It has turned out just as mamma said—your thoughtfulness is better than your generosity, though you don’t mean it so. Anyhow, since then mamma and I always call the piano cover “the top decoration.”

I am writing too much about this, when I have so much else to tell you; but I could not bear that you should think me careless and forgetful.

The piano has been very useful to me, for I have six little pupils. I hate to teach, but I’d get along all right if I only dared to ask higher prices for the lessons. The mothers are very

good to me, and I don’t want to offend them.

Mrs. Chisholm gave me a dotted white muslin gown one day. It was fresh material and fitted me quite well, but the sleeves are the old-fashioned shape, and the skirt is not full enough. Next, Mrs. Draper handed over to me her eldest daughter’s last Summer’s blue denim yachting suit and hat. I was so glad of this last, for I hadn’t any hat that was really stylish. She was very nervous and apologetic when she asked me would I take the things, and tried to say that the gown did not fit her daughter, but I told her simply that I did not mind one bit, and that if I could wear them I would. Inwardly I was sure she gave the gown away because it was last year’s style, and Katherine Draper wouldn’t wear it. When I got home I measured the skirt—only four yards round the bottom! Mamma knew how to cut it over and give it a flare, and it is really fetching now.

I pose as Maud Muller all the time. That is, I mean, I don’t try to be fine; I just wear muslins and a sailor hat, and look gentle, and everyone seems to take to me. I am beginning to think it really does a person good to live in the country, at any rate in Summer. I know I never could stand it in Winter.

You did so much to make me feel happy in this stupid place, and youth has done the rest. Mamma says I must always remember that now I have that in my favor; I am young. She says: “Wait till you’re old, Lily, at least until you have seen as much trouble as I have—that is what makes one feel old—and you’ll know how hateful the country can be.”

But mamma’s always just that way. So gloomy! so retrospective! so tired of it all! I know one thing—when I’m as old as she is I won’t be asking anybody—no, not even you, my dear, dear Mrs. Maitland—for anything. *Somebody* will be giving me all I want, or rather, I shall take what I want, and *somebody* will be only too happy to pay for it all. So much

good, at any rate, my good looks and my youth shall do for me.

Now you'll think that I need another lecture, and that I'm a harum-scarum thing and haven't taken to heart all the lovely, good advice you wrote me in your last letter. The truth is, my dear, true friend—I love to think you're that, and I know you are all the time—as I read your letter I saw that there was a whole page of goody-goody coming, so I put that page aside to study at my leisure, and—would you believe it?—the wind must have blown it into the scrap-basket or something, for I have never seen it again from that day to this. Of course, then, I didn't read it, and so I'm just as bad as ever. I know you're sorry for me, but of course you can't realize what a temptation life is when one is poor. It is easy to be good, to be real, religiously good when one is rich. It is so nice to help others and to put in stained glass windows and all that. Well, this may come to me in the future, the grand, glorious future. Who knows?

I shall plunge right in now and tell you what has happened. In the words of the song, "*I'm in love, I'm in love, as you all can plainly see,*" and it's Charley Richards. He's just a dear! He comes four times a week to take a music lesson, and he says he *absorbs* it, for he won't strike a note. He makes me play and sing to him, and he says it's worth two dollars a night to him. Really, Mrs. Maitland, though it sounds silly to say so, he is my best and most devoted pupil, and his love for music brings me in quite a nice income. So I forgive the piano, after all, for being so ugly and, if it won't hurt your feelings, let me say a little wheezy, and I'm just as thankful as I can be for the wisdom of your advice when you told me not to refuse any pupil, no matter who it might be.

Mamma says that she'll have to make out a regular litany of thanksgiving for all the things you have sent her. "*For all the pease and beans and beets we thank you, Mrs. Maitland. For the eggs and chickens, for*

the strawberries and currants, for the paper novels, and all the general utility articles, we thank you, Mrs. Maitland," and so on. But truly, dearest, we do appreciate every little thing, even the smallest. Mamma often tells me that the things I think are big seem small enough to you, surrounded as you are by every luxury. I like to think that you have everything. And all I can do is to amuse you once in a while with my chatter. If I were near you I could run in to see you, and then I could tell you all my silly little longings, but I am ashamed to write the half of them on paper. If you had ever said one word that sounded as if I had gone too far I'd shut up tight, but you are never carried away by my enthusiasms, and I know that I need not be afraid of being troublesome, for I feel sure that you will snub my extravagance when you think you ought to.

If I could have a Leghorn hat trimmed with ragged sailors, and a pair of white gloves, elbow length, and a deep-rose-pink sash, I'd think my good angel had heard my prayers. You know that the 10th of September'll be my birthday. But really I'm not hinting; I don't mean *you*, you dear thing!

My shoes are the worst. All the girls have those lovely yellow ones, and they don't cost much—not for other people, but it seems, oh, *so* much to poor little me!

Your loving

SILLY LILY.

P. S.—Charley Richards is a gentleman of leisure. He doesn't do a thing, but he has great musical taste, and he may compose some day. He has big black eyes with dark circles under them, and tangle^y lashes, and his hair tumbles down on one side of his head like Clyde Fitch's, and he wears coarse plaid golf stockings and horribly ugly knickers that are awfully swell, and best of all, he can't even *pretend* to say his r's. He's rich! I don't mean he has money, for he hasn't a cent, though he does pay so well for his music lessons; but he is just what

he ought to be to charm a girl and make her have a nice time. That's what I mean by rich.

Oh, life is meant for the young, but I wish somebody'd tell me why there is never any money in it till you're old! Charley says his father's in Australia, and he never speaks of his mother. He's staying at an elegant place on the hill that he calls "The Shanty." He vows he does not possess a penny himself, but of course his father is wealthy enough for half a dozen, and if he'd die and get out of the way I'd marry Charley in a minute. I know he'd ask me then. He hasn't yet—as things are. I hope that you don't think I'm bold to tell you all this.

III

September.

MY OWN DARLING MRS. MAITLAND:

I write to you with a full heart after my six weeks of silence. I have not been idle, I assure you, and the news I have for you will astonish you and make up to you for any neglect or selfishness on my part heretofore. I keep saying to myself, "Remember, Lily, how fortunate you are—how happy you are going to be," and all the rest of it; and when I am not saying this myself mamma is saying it to me.

Here, indeed, I can find happiness, I think; for mamma is like a different woman. Unless you could see her face to face you could not believe that a peep into the changed future could make such a difference in her. She never has a word of whining now or a word of reproof for me. Yet she might have felt aggrieved under the circumstances, for—how I laugh as I write it!—mamma and I seemed to be rivals at one time. At least, she thought so. I always knew.

When she found out the truth she only said: "Well, it was not at all strange that I was deceived, my dear, for it would have been much more appropriate, and I should have felt it my duty to think only of your future

and well-being. It is a great relief to me, I assure you, to have it settled otherwise, and to know that you are contented."

I think it was good of her to let me off so easily, for if she had married Mr. Richards she could have bossed me worse than ever; and you know how I hate that.

To know that I am contented—that is what mamma said. Am I? All girls are mysterious creatures, aren't they? And I am a sensible girl. The type is rare, I suppose, and so I must pay the price for being different from the majority. That is the way I feel. One has to choose, and I can conscientiously say that I think I have done what was best.

Charley is a dear. That is what I have always thought. If his father were old enough to die soon, why, I might take Charley, though that would be foolish, too, if I hadn't long to wait. I told Charley that one of the chief inducements was having him around all the time, but he wasn't nice about it. He talks cynically and sneeringly, and makes fun of his poor, dear papa, who is hardly ever silly, and really wonderfully good to Charley. It seems almost like a slur on me to say the things he does; but I know that of all men Charley could never intend to reflect in an uncomplimentary way on my conduct.

When Charley's father came home so unexpectedly no one was prepared to see him, and when I met him I had no idea that he was old Mr. Richards. He looks about sixty-five and he is—well, portly. His skin is ruddy and his hair is fuzzy and white, and so are his little choppy whiskers. He is short and has nice little hands and feet. He is particularly fresh and clean-looking. So you see, after all, he's not half-bad.

Ah, me! Sometimes I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't for buying my gorgeous trousseau, and wandering over Chiselmede, which is what I have named my new home that Charley so absurdly calls "The Shanty." Mr. Richards will let me refurbish it, but he says that I'll enjoy it more if I do

it gradually; and as the rooms are all very pretty and complete now, I am willing to wait until after we are married.

Married! That dread word is out. The truth is told. You have my news. Yes, my friend, I am to be married, and to the father, not to the son. Charley never really asked me, and Mr. Richards did, and thinking of mother and my own dull prospects, I took the cat by her heels and settled the matter. For the best, I hope. The cat means my little flirtation with Charley. Poor pussy! she yowled some when I flung her overboard, but I must have some fun while I'm young, and you can't have fun without money. I acknowledge the apparent truth of all your wise words, which were written, no doubt, to make me endure a life of hard work with a possible reward of love-in-a-cottage by-and-bye; but the prospect of old Mr. Wolf growling at the door and shivering Dan Cupid pluming his wings for flight was not enticing. No, thank you, dearest; you haven't tried it, and I have—at least, the first part. I should inevitably nag Charley if I married him on a small income, and I'd hate to lay all my plans for Charley to inherit old Mr. Richards's fortune and then some fine day suddenly find that he had married a young girl, as he'd be sure to do, and that Charley and I were left out in the cold. That would be beastly indeed! You see I have thought it all out and acted with prudence.

Mr. Richards is very fond of young girls, and when we are married and he isn't quite so devoted—he is really *soft* now, you know—why, I think I can have a fine time. Just now it is somewhat wearing.

What a price we women pay for our luxuries! But if one has a sensuous temperament like mine one must have things. Mr. Richards says he loves me for it, and that I shall sit on a tuffet and be fed with strawberries, sugar and cream.

Well, he has begun already. I'm to order my trousseau just how, when and where I like, and he's going to

let me pay for it afterward, when I have the right to dip my hands into his pockets as often as I please. That's what he says. Isn't it good of him? Aren't you glad that I am not going to ask you for a single thing? You have given me more than enough in the days gone by.

I must not omit to tell you that I sent your piano back to your house yesterday, and I said good-bye to all my pupils as pupils except Charley. He won't say good-bye, or howd'ye do, or anything, but I don't care if he is mad. His father is young enough to get married again if he wants to. He's got all his senses yet, and if he wasn't quite so stout he'd look much younger. He's kind, anyway, and he's rich. I don't believe that Charley'll be a bit better looking when he is as old, and that is the future I'd have if I married him. That's what I told him—in joke, of course; I told him that I was only anticipating my future.

The pink sash and the Leghorn hat were my weapons of war, dear Mrs. Maitland. With these I compelled my fate. Mr. Richards said he never saw anything sweeter or daintier than I was on the morning of the tenth of September, my birthday, as I wandered through the fields picking daisies. He saw me from his window, and came out laughably soon, considering he made such a fine toilet, but he hurried down, fearing he should see me fly away.

He looked quite grand as he came up to me, hat in hand, and most politely asked me all about the place, and the fun is, he knew a great deal more about it than I did.

Charley had gone away that day; he said that he was obliged to go on business, but I was angry with him for leaving me on my birthday, and I flirted desperately with old Mr. Richards as soon as I found out who he was, and we spent the whole day together under the trees and poking about. I let all my music lessons go, and pretended to the children afterward that it was because it was my birthday.

He came to see me every day after that for two weeks. That was the time mother thought he was smitten with her charms, and renewed her youth. How I laugh when I recall the way she dressed up and donned her prettiest manners! But, after all, it did her a lot of good. She continues to look younger, and I tease her all the time about the conquests she will make at my wedding in the beautiful violet velvet gown I have ordered for her.

Oh, friend of my girlhood, your silly Lily knows how to spend money, and life is going to be a grand bazaar for me now every day I live.

I am going to be good, too. I am going to be just the way you were to me when I was poor. I used to hate it sometimes; yes, dearie, *I did!* I can afford to tell you the truth now. I used to think that there was no end to the nice things you might do for me; and I wanted so much that, after all, what you did seemed not much by comparison. Now, however, I realize that one's money is one's own, and not for "daws to peck at." I shall give, but wisely and sensibly—*old* clothes, and ugly things, and things that I wouldn't use myself, like that *bête noire*, your square piano.

I know that in such ways your dependents learn to get along on less than they ever dreamed to be possible, to dress on what would else be stuffed into the ragbag, and so on. Besides, taking pains to think how to teach them to economize makes you seem good to yourself.

My brain works these matters over and over, and mamma says I've settled it all. But I know I have got on to how rich women think and act. It would not be right to give poor people handsome things. Everyone to his own station in life. If a person is not led astray by impulse, but reasons such matters to a conclusion, I am sure one can be generous on very little, and there are so many foolish and pretty, tempting things to spend money for that no matter how rich

one may be there's a use for all one's money.

When I think about all this, then I am happy, but when I see Charley, then I am blue. It will be different when I see him every day. When I'm his father's wife he'll have to be nice to me, and respectful, too. He won't dare then to scold me, for I can make his father shut down on Monsieur's allowance. That will be fun!

As for you, I shall always remember that you almost drove us into the country, where I met my fate. You made me give music lessons, which brought Charley to me, and no marriage can ever blur the memory of those most harmonious lessons. You sent me the sash and hat that made me look "so baby sweet." I quote the words of my antique lover. He is so silly sometimes! A great sort of baby I am!

If you could only come to my wedding my triumph would be complete, but you will have gotten back in time to see me in New York in the Winter, anyway, and then I can tell you all the ins and outs of the whole affair. They make quite a novel. You see I have some romance left in me, for all I am so wise.

I shall have a quiet wedding, in one sense, for I am sending out invitations to the church only. But it will take place in New York, and I shall ask every rich person I ever met, to show them I can be grander—yes, and prettier and more of *everything*—than any of them, and I shall ask every poor person I ever knew—every shabby-genteel person, I mean—because I want to make them envious.

When I trail up the aisle in chiffon and satin, what difference will it make to me that Mr. Richards is to meet me at the chancel instead of— No, I won't say it, for *Charley* never asked me.

Your successful, triumphant, but ever loving

SILLY LILY.

P. S.—I think I might sign myself Wise Lily now.

A DEUCE GAME

By Miriam Cruikshank

“THIRTY—forty—game! A love set! How provoking! Why, I don’t believe you are even looking, Mr. Kemp.”

The girl, a slip of a creature in her first season, pushed back the huge, beruffled sunbonnet that Dame Fashion has decreed shall be *de rigueur* on certain occasions of this year of grace, and looked with half-petulant inquiry at her companion. Before he spoke the man lounging on the turf a few yards away contemplated with the eye of a connoisseur the effect of the tumbled auburn pompadour surmounting her puckered forehead. Then he shook his head.

“I’m not up on games, you know—at least, not that sort. Besides, I had something better to look at.”

An impatient shrug of the shoulders was the girl’s immediate answer to the thinly veiled compliment, and then:

“Miss Lessing plays; she is devoted to tennis.”

“She does—and is. May I trouble you for the connection?”

The critical admiration in his gaze gave place to an expression of challenge. But the girl did not see. She was mutilating the turf with her toe, and the occupation appeared engrossing.

“You and she are awfully good friends,” she said at last.

“You have said it.”

“And yet—”

She hesitated, then colored deeply as she met the look of amused admiration in the eyes opposite.

“And yet—?” he repeated. “What were you going to say?”

“Nothing—that is, I—oh, nothing.”

“Nothing?” Kemp was repeating again—this time absently. His eyes had wandered from the fresh, piquant face before him to the clubhouse, where gaily dressed maids and matrons flitted to and fro on the piazzas overlooking the Hudson, and then to the trim, thickly peopled tennis courts, from which he and his companion were only partly hidden by the low-hanging branches of intervening trees. The amused look had left his face and in its stead had come another—tired, repressed—the habitual expression of the man.

There was nothing extraordinary about Kemp. He was twenty-eight and looked thirty-five. His undecided hair was growing thin over the temples, and his figure and face were those of a man who did not lead a healthy life. Yet he had the reputation of being very “successful” with women. That this reputation—let it count for what it will—was deserved may be taken for granted, since everybody accepted it as truth. He smiled a trifle cynically as he glanced across at the people in the tennis courts and reflected that they were probably even then drawing their conclusions regarding his attitude to the girl near him. Estelle Lessing had said—but what did it matter what Estelle Lessing said? Two people as poor as she and he had no business to know or care what each other said, and he savagely pulled himself from his reverie to meet the indignant gaze of the big hazel eyes under the sunbonnet. He had the grace to appear somewhat confused as he exclaimed:

“Really, I beg your pardon, Miss Morris; did you speak?”

"Only three times; it's of no consequence."

The words ended with a quiver of the lips, and Kemp saw that the dimpled brown hands twisted nervously in the short grass on which the girl had thrown herself during his abstraction. His manner changed.

"I know I appear unpardonable, but—" there was a curious alteration in his voice, something that made her heart beat furiously and brought the warm blood into her rounded, childish cheeks—"but I am going to ask your forgiveness, Miss Madge. The world has been dealing roughly with me lately, and a woman's sympathy, a woman's—friendship, would mean a great deal just now. If I did not hear what you said it was because your presence had made me quietly happy—had helped me to drift away from everything. Between real friends, you know, there can be silence that does not mean boredom. Don't you think so?"

It was hardly as delicately put as he could have wished, but Madge was young, too young to be well versed in the way of a man with a maid. A bald and patchy compliment did not jar on her as it would on some women—Estelle, for instance. She showed signs of softening, and her eyes met his childishly, questioningly.

"I hardly thought you needed my friendship. There are so many others. Miss Lessing is a friend of yours."

"So you remarked before," with a return to something of his former manner.

"Mrs. Hildrup says that you are engaged."

"Mrs. Hildrup is a lady of great discernment—nevertheless, she occasionally makes mistakes."

"Then you and she are not engaged?"

"Mrs. Hildrup and I? The law would interfere. She is not divorced from Jonas, to the best of my knowledge, and he certainly is alive."

"You know perfectly well whom I mean. You and Miss Lessing."

"From her conversation on the drive over here I should judge not."

"You drove over together?"

"Yes."

Silence, long continued, followed. Then the girl spoke again:

"They have all stopped playing."

"Yes?"

"Miss Lessing and Tom have won every set. Tom is my cousin."

"So I understand."

"His father and papa were brothers. Tom was an only child, and has all uncle's money. I—he says he wants to marry Estelle Lessing."

Again the challenging look came into Kemp's face, but it passed quickly, and there was no hesitation in his reply:

"A very proper and worthy desire."

"I told him what Mrs. Hildrup had said, and he swore awfully. Tom has very bad manners, but he is *so* good-looking. I will tell him what you have said, though I don't suppose it will make much difference."

"I suppose not."

"Do you think she would have him?"

"I couldn't say."

"She is very popular, isn't she?"

"Is she?"

"You have known her for a long time?"

"About ten years. You don't remember back that far, do you?"

"I don't see why not. I'm nineteen!"

"As much as that? Really, I had no idea."

"It's not old. Miss Lessing is twenty-four," indignantly.

"Is she? I didn't know. I missed my job on the census—too feeble, they said."

"You are perfectly horrid!" The girl's voice broke and her last word was accompanied by something very like a sob. "You said you wanted me for a friend, and now you do nothing but laugh at me."

"And friends must always be considerate. I'll try to remember. I'm afraid you will think me a bear very often."

"Miss Lessing—"

"Couldn't we leave Miss Lessing out for a little while and talk only

about the partners in this friendship? I want to tell you a little about myself. Will it be such a bore?"

"A bore to hear you talk! How silly you are! But I don't believe you think I understand."

"Oh, yes I do. I'm quite sure of it. But I never was much of a fellow, and hard knocks have eliminated anything that might be attractive to a young girl like you. The story of my life is not a pleasant tale, so let's cut it out. Shall you be here long?"

"Only till next week. Mamma hates the country and only comes here in June to please me. We spend July and August in Newport. Perhaps you will be there for a time."

"Hardly. You seem to have exalted ideas concerning the income of a country lawyer."

"I—I didn't know."

"Naturally. I don't fancy poverty has ever been much in your line."

"Is it very nasty?"

"Very," soberly. "I detest cheese rinds, strong butter and livery horses."

"Now you are laughing at me again."

"I swear it's no laughing matter. I consider my poverty the most serious thing in my life."

"But you won't always be poor."

"I trust you are a prophet, but I fear otherwise. I'm not of the stuff that succeeds."

The girl moved restlessly.

"I suppose we ought to be going. They are all leaving the piazza. Well—that is, shall I see you again?"

She spoke almost coldly, but her heart beat so fast she felt that he must hear it. Her long lashes drooped over the hazel eyes, hiding them entirely.

Kemp rose and came toward her. As they stood facing each other a sudden, mad, uncontrollable impulse seized him, and he took her in his arms.

"Madge," he said, softly, "look at me. Shall I see you again? It all depends on you."

The large, childlike eyes met his fearlessly, frankly, for a moment. "I didn't know you cared," she breathed rather than said, "but I care

awfully." Then the eyelids drooped again and the blood surged over cheek and chin and brow, and she hid her face on his breast.

Kemp stood motionless, one arm round the girl. With his free hand he stroked the soft, tumbled hair. A great wave of pity swept over him—pity for the trembling child who believed in and loved him; pity for himself, though he scarcely deserved it; and then, as another face, older, graver than Madge's, with a mocking light in the big gray eyes and a mouth half-scornful, half-sweet, rose before him, pity for her, if she cared—of that he was never sure. He put his hand under Madge's chin and raised her face level with his own.

"Thank you, dear," he said, simply, and gently kissed her on the forehead, and then, almost hesitatingly, on the lips.

An hour later Kemp and Estelle drove out of the Country Club gates and along the river road. They were among the last to leave. Madge Morris, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes—whose light did not fade even under Miss Lessing's quiet scrutiny and her Cousin Tom's tactless teasing—had departed in her high cart under the latter's escort, quite prepared to sympathize with any rapturous remarks he might wish to make on the subject of Miss Lessing. Tom, however, was strangely silent, and Madge, content with her own dreams, did not attempt to make conversation. She would perhaps have been a few degrees happier could she have been in the despised livery cart behind, but then Estelle and he were such old friends she could afford to sacrifice to the former one hour of her new-found happiness.

The other pair were silent, too, but that was nothing unusual. For the first time in all the years of their friendship, dating back to knee-skirts and pigtailed for Estelle, and freshman days for himself, Kemp did not know what to say to her. He had flirted and danced through his college days with other girls, but through it all

Estelle had never failed to receive a weekly scrawl, and underneath their easy-going chumship had been the unacknowledged thought that they would go through life together.

Kemp graduated at the law school and came back to Norwood to practice. Estelle lived with an aunt in the same town. Neither was bound by home ties, and they were much together. She had laughed at him, teased him, sympathized with him, but for a long time no word of love was spoken. Then it came suddenly, and they met it as they had met every other subject of mutual concern—frankly, without embarrassment.

"We can't possibly get married," Estelle had said, positively. "I haven't a penny except what Aunt Dora gives me, and she hates you. And there's no chance of your making a fortune—you are too lazy. We'll just have to be friends."

And Kemp agreed with her, reviling the while the Fates that had fashioned the circumstances that enmeshed them. Estelle and he keeping house on his income! He could imagine their old acquaintances forgetting them—imagine themselves dropping little by little from old haunts and occupations, and then growing further and further apart, bored by each other and poverty. It would never do.

This had happened nearly two years before, and the people who had lived in hourly expectation of hearing the Kemp-Lessing engagement announced had grown tired of watching, and finally lost interest in a match that moved so slowly. In the meantime, the two most concerned went serenely on their way, and until very recently it had not seemed that anything would occur to jar on their quiet relationship. It was of all this Kemp was thinking now as he sat surveying his companion with moody eyes. His gaze wandered from the small, well-poised head down to the long, slender, ungloved hand lying in her lap. What capable-looking hands she had! What an extremely satisfactory companion Estelle was, any-

way! She always appeared to understand him—never asked too many questions or put him in a disagreeable position. How different—pshaw!

"Estelle," he said, abruptly.

"Well?" She was not looking at him, and there was a tired sound in her voice. It was a very rare thing for Estelle to betray weariness, even if she felt it.

"I—I want to talk to you. I had an offer to-day."

"An offer? This isn't leap year. Who was the lady? She has made a mistake."

Her voice came mockingly now, and she had turned a little toward him.

"Nonsense! I am not trifling. I had a letter from a Western corporation. There is a great deal of business to attend to, and it means life in a small town in Nevada. They offer me a fixed salary that, if not precisely princely, would enable me to pay my board bills, and there would be no Country Club dues."

"Are you going to accept?"

"I hadn't decided. It is that I wish to talk over with you now."

"And the alternative?"

"Is to marry Madge Morris."

"So I supposed."

"Your powers of observation haven't deteriorated."

"Humph! It would hardly have taken a clairvoyant to read her face to-day. I knew the moment you came up on the piazza that you had proposed and been accepted. A girl is usually easy to read just after her first proposal."

She spoke quietly—so quietly as to appear indifferent—but she felt thankful that the rapid sinking of the sun permitted her to sit back in shadow.

"I hardly think I ought to defend myself, Estelle. We had agreed on this thing long ago, but it never seemed that I should be the first to break our—our—friendship. I meant to leave it to you, and of course—oh, what a blundering fool I am! Estelle, it must all depend on you."

"You are too considerate."

"What do you mean?"

"Since confessions are in order—and congratulations—"

"Well?" impatiently.

"Well, I saw how things were going, and I accepted Tom Morris this afternoon. You know the part of Patience never appealed to me."

"I am damned if you did!"

"I am afraid you are, then."

"Afraid—what?"

"Afraid you are 'damned.' I certainly accepted him." And then she burst into a fit of hysterical laughter.

Kemp leaned forward and gave the horse a sharp cut with the whip, a proceeding that immediately necessitated the use of all his strength to quiet the frightened animal. An oppressive silence followed. The sun was almost out of sight and the Summer dusk was deepening about them. The regular beat of the horse's hoofs on the shell road and the occasional croak of a frog were the only sounds. They were within a half-mile of home, but Kemp deliberately turned into a road leading in a nearly opposite direction.

"It is probably the last time together," he said, "and we might as well stay longer. Mrs. Audrey won't worry about you, and there is no one interested in my doings."

Estelle had stopped laughing and leaned back wearily. She looked white and tired in the dim light.

"Estelle," he said, "is this all? Must this be the end?"

"I suppose so," faintly. "We shall live near together and see each other often, and be very proper and right and moral, and people will say, 'There was nothing in that old affair, after all. See how easy they are.' But—but this is our real good-bye."

"Estelle! For God's sake, hush!"

He held the reins loosely in one hand and with his free arm drew her to him so close that she could feel the fierce beating of his heart.

"Estelle—sweetheart—I can't give you up—I can't!" and he covered her face with wild kisses. "Don't you see we have made a mistake? By heaven! if I thought that any other

man would kiss you as I have, I should kill him—kill him!"

She drew herself away, trembling and half-crying.

"Oh, it isn't right; I know it isn't. Why did you do it? We played a deuce game this afternoon, we four, and now—" again came the hysterical laughter.

"Now," he finished, grimly, "we are playing the deuce."

The cart made another quick turn, and Kemp drew out his watch, peering at it in the dim light.

"What are you going to do?" asked Estelle, anxiously.

"We are going to elope." He laughed like a schoolboy. "It is just 7.30; at 8.07 the New York express stops at Norwood Junction. We shall get into the city by ten o'clock and be married. Thank your lucky stars, Estelle, that you live in a State where no license is required."

"And then—Aunt Dora and—and all the others?"

She was still trembling—very different from the ordinary Estelle, who scorned to be ruled and laughed at sentiment.

"We will send Mrs. Audrey a note from the station. The horse and cart will have to go back. I am not thinking of right or wrong now, only of you, my darling—my darling!"

Twenty minutes later Kemp entered the dingy little waiting-room where Estelle sat huddled in a corner, her hat pulled over her eyes.

"I have settled everything," he said. "A boy will take the horse back, and I sent a line to your aunt saying you had gone to spend the night with a friend. The train will be here in a moment—and, Estelle, I have telegraphed to Nevada that I will be out next month. We will take an orthodox wedding trip, and I can come back here after the first of July and wind up things—after the first," he repeated, in an uncertain sort of way.

Estelle did not notice. She rose and walked to the door in silence. Then she turned and gave him a

searching look. The boyishness had vanished and his eyes were more tired and discontented than usual. The change jarred on her already overcharged nerves.

"Oh, I can't go—I can't!" she gasped. "Please take me back."

The roar of the incoming train almost drowned her voice, but the sudden flash of light showed her face white and imploring.

For reply Kemp lifted her bodily up the steps and into the car. "Don't make a scene," he said, almost roughly, and then, more gently: "It's too late to go back now, Estelle—we must make the best of each other."

Her lips framed a protest, but the shriek of the whistle made the words inaudible. An instant later they were rushing along in the Summer night together.



IN CHURCH

JUST in front of my pew sits a maiden,
On her hat a little brown wing
That has touches of tropical azure
In the luminous sunlight of Spring.

Through the bloom-colored pane shines a glory
By which the vast shadows are stirred;
But I pine for the spirit and splendor
That painted the wing of the bird.

The organ rolls down its great anthem,
With the soul of a song it is blent;
But for me, I am sick for the singing
Of one little song that is spent.

The voice of the curate is gentle—
"No sparrow shall fall to the ground"—
But the little limp wing on the bonnet
Is mocking the merciful sound.

Close and sweet is the breath of the lilies
Asleep on the altar of prayer;
But my soul is athirst for the fragrance
That greeted the bird fastened there.

Oh, I wonder if ever or never,
With white wings o'er-weary and furled,
I shall find the sweet spirit of Pity
Abroad in this pitiless world.

CHELSEA CURTIS FRASER.



PRECAUTIONARY PREPARATIONS

MRS. TOWE—What do you need with those dark-colored shirt waists in the country?

MISS UNDA TOWE—Why, ma, won't there be any young men up there to sit in the hammock with evenings?

LES FLEURS QUI SE FANENT

Par Henry de Forge

Aix-les-Bains, 16 août, 1901.

A MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Il m'arrive quelque chose d'extraordinaire, mon bon ami, quelque chose qui bouleverse toutes mes théories et tous mes projets. Malgré mon très vif désir de t'aller voir, malgré l'attrait des perdreaux et des lièvres de tes plaines, malgré la joie charmante de bavarder avec toi sous les grands arbres de ton parc, je suis retenu ici par ce que je vais tâcher de t'expliquer. Tu ne m'en voudras pas, j'en suis sûr, en apprenant que ce sont des raisons de cœur, presque d'amour.

Je t'ai dit souvent, te souviens-tu, que je ne me marierais jamais, parce que je suis trop difficile.

C'est absurde, la beauté n'étant pas indispensable ici-bas, surtout en matière d'affection. Mais que veux-tu! j'ai cette idée en moi, depuis longtemps, que je ne pourrais jamais épouser qu'une femme parfaitement belle.

Je n'avais jamais rencontré l'oiseau rare de mes rêves.

Souvent j'allais dans les musées passer de longues heures devant les toiles des maîtres, cherchant à trouver dans leurs fictions une forme précise pour mon idéal, à découvrir les lignes exactes de la perfection.

L'existence prosaïque, hélas! ne me fournissait que des jeunes filles bien différentes de ces tableaux, toujours gâtées par un nez trop long, une bouche trop petite, des mains affreuses.

Or, depuis hier, mon bon ami, je crois avoir trouvé. Je dirai même plus; j'en suis sûr. Il ne s'agit pas d'un tableau du Louvre dont un être humain incarnerait imparfaitement l'image poétique, mais de tous les

tableaux de tous les peintres du monde entier réunis en une seule figure, impeccables.

Un rêve quoi, un rêve fait de la beauté de toutes les femmes, un rêve que la nature sut animer, faire sourire et faire chanter.

Je l'aime déjà à en mourir.

Où l'ai-je rencontrée? Comment la chose a-t-elle eu lieu? Je n'en sais plus rien. Je crois que c'était au Casino, avant-hier. Avec qui était-elle? Je l'ignore et ne veux même pas le savoir. Son fin profil se dessinait dans l'ombre perdue d'une baignoire de théâtre. Je n'ai rien voulu connaître de plus. Je l'ai contemplée pendant deux heures, sans être vu, et j'ai vécu de son souvenir depuis ce temps.

Hier, je l'ai retrouvée. Tu me diras que je la cherchais. Peut-être!

Comme, le soir, je me promenais mélancolique dans les avenues désertes du parc, j'entendis une voix douce chanter.

Je ne sais pourquoi, dès cet instant, j'eus la certitude que pareille voix ne pouvait appartenir qu'à mon inconnue; au détour d'un bosquet, à l'extrême du jardin, son cher profil m'est apparu une seconde fois, dans l'encadrement d'une fenêtre, plus beau encore s'il est possible qu'au théâtre, avec le charme nouveau de sa chanson.

En conscience, puis-je venir te voir?
À toi de cœur,

JACQUES.

II

Valjoli (Indre), 18 août, 1901.
À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:
Certes non, mon cher, tu ne pen-

pas venir me voir. Reste auprès de ta belle. Aime-la de toutes tes forces et de toute ta vie, si elle en est digne, de toute ta folie si elle ne l'est pas. Je vous donne ma bénédiction.

Mais laisse-moi te confier une objection, peut-être vaine, qui m'est venue à l'esprit: Elle m'effraie un peu, cette beauté impeccable dont tu me parles. Les femmes trop belles sont bien dangereuses, car on leur donne le maximum de tendresse dont est capable le cœur humain. Et quand, à la longue, quelquefois tôt, quelquefois tard, toujours pourtant, cette beauté vient à se faner, n'y a-t-il pas une désillusion plus douloureuse, une peine plus grande?

Au fait, je me mêle là sottement de tes affaires. Ton inconnue n'a probablement pas du tout envie de se faner et peut-être la verras-tu toujours avec les yeux de ton amour.

À toi,

EDMOND DANTON.

III

Aix-les-Bains, 20 août, 1901.

À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Ne t'inquiètes pas, mon bon ami, je serais désespéré d'être le mari d'une femme qui ne sût pas être belle toujours, et l'objection dont tu me parles serait parfaitement juste, si je n'étais pas complètement sûr de ma petite Béatrix.

Elle s'appelle Béatrix. Je le sais. Le hasard s'est entremis avec beaucoup de gentillesse. Je l'ai revue, figure-toi, à un *garden party* donné par une vieille dame que je connais ici. Quelle stupéfaction lorsqu'on m'a tout à coup présenté à cette jeune fille!

Elle s'appelle Béatrix Villiers. La mère est veuve, et d'une famille des plus honorables. Elle était là avec sa sœur, personne plus grave et moins jolie. Chez cette sœur, les traits se sont accentués, la bouche si petite de Béatrix s'est élargie sans grâce. Elle ne vaut pas sa cadette. Peu m'importe, puisque c'est la cadette que j'aime et que je compte épouser! Oui,

épouser; la chose est possible. La situation de fortune me convient et la dame chez qui nous étions, prise par moi pour confidente, a promis de s'employer.

Nous nous recontrerons demain chez elle; à l'heure du thé je serai présenté à la mère, que je ne connais pas. Me voilà l'homme le plus heureux du monde, comme Béatrix est la plus belle femme de toute la terre.

TON JACQUES.

IV

Aix-les-Bains, 26 août, 1901.

AU MÊME:

Je suis ennuyé, mon bon ami. On dirait que tu m'as porté guigne avec tes théories l'autre jour. Ne ris pas de moi; je suis extraordinairement agacé et c'est absurde.

Je viens de rencontrer Béatrix et sa mère chez cette dame dont je t'ai parlé. J'ai passé là une heure divine. Rien ne manquait, fleurs, coucher de soleil au-dessus des montagnes et reflets mourants sur le lac du Bourget.

Je crois bien que je ne suis pas différent à cette jeune fille et si les choses continuent, nous ne tarderons pas à parler mariage officiellement.

Or, sais-tu ce qui me préoccupait? j'avais en mémoire tes fameuses objections et je ne cessais de regarder la mère de Béatrix. Madame Villiers est une femme de trente-neuf ans, c'est-à-dire pas vieille encore et pourtant elle est loin d'avoir la beauté de sa fille.

Et ce qui m'effraie, c'est qu'elle lui ressemble singulièrement. Elle devait être son portrait frappant il y a vingt ans, mais dans ces malheureux vingt ans elle est devenue une caricature. Tout ce que j'adore en Béatrix se retrouve à l'état de défaut chez sa mère. La petite bouche s'est empâtée, les grands yeux se sont bouffis et le nez, le nez surtout, qui est si délicieux chez la jeune fille, est abominable chez sa mère.

J'avais déjà remarqué du changement chez sa sœur aînée, qui avait dû être fort belle, mais qui, de cinq

ans plus âgée, était déjà presque laide.

Je me demande ce que sera Béatrix dans dix ans.

Il y a de quoi se moquer de moi, n'est-ce pas? mais je t'assure que cela m'a gâté la visite. J'ai justement vu dans un album le portrait de Madame Villiers mère à dix-huit ans. C'était un amour. Est-ce possible que si peu de temps puisse transformer ainsi une femme? J'ai peur, mon bon ami, conseille-moi.

JACQUES MAURIN.

Je regardais cette dame chez qui nous étions, belle encore à soixante-cinq ans, un vrai portrait de Marquise Pompadour, sans une ride et avec d'admirables cheveux blancs. De telles femmes ont dû rester belles toute leur vie, qu'en penses-tu?

V

Valjoli (Indre), 1 septembre, 1901.
À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:

Je suis désespéré, mon bon ami, d'être la cause involontaire de tes ennuis. Qu'importe le visage de Madame Villiers mère? Ce n'est pas elle que tu épouses, morbleu! Et puis, il faut te dire que toutes les femmes n'ont qu'un temps. Le bonheur que tu auras pendant ce temps-là compensera l'ennui de la voir vieillir.

Quant à ta Marquise Pompadour, elle me laisse assez sceptique, car elle a pu être fort laide jadis. Cela s'est vu. La beauté n'est pas éternelle. Elle vient souvent de bonne heure, quelquefois fort tard; l'essentiel est qu'elle soit venue. Calme tes scrupules, prends en affection Madame Villiers, qui doit être une excellente femme, et aime sa fille de tout ton cœur.

EDMOND.

VI

Aix-les-Bains, 3 septembre, 1901.
À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Ah! mon ami, j'étais soumis, archi-soumis, prêt à suivre tes bons conseils,

décidé à oublier ces craintes puériles, mais vraiment le destin s'acharne après moi. Juge plutôt! je suis tout à fait bien avec les Villiers, qui me reçoivent chez eux le mieux du monde, et je passe même officieusement pour candidat à la main de Béatrix. Cela se chuchote dans Aix-les-Bains.

C'est au point qu'on a eu l'idée admirable—sais-tu de quoi?—de faire venir, sous un prétexte, la grand'mère —oui, mon bon, une respectable aïeule, côté maternel. J'ai eu l'honneur de lui être présenté tantôt. C'est une alerte vieille de soixante-huit ans, très aimable, et qui m'a fait force compliments.

Mais ce qui m'avait ennuyé chez la mère m'épouvante chez la grand'mère. Elle aussi a dû être, à vingt ans, le portrait de Béatrix. Quelle ruine aujourd'hui! Je n'aurais jamais cru que les traits d'un être humain puissent s'altérer de la sorte.

Trop physionomiste peut-être—j'ai ce malheur—je passe mon temps à comparer ces trois femmes, ces quatre même, puisque la sœur ainée fait partie de la série. J'ai suivi la progression constante. Dans cinq ans—dans vingt ans—dans quarante ans! L'enlaidissement à petites journées.

Et dire qu'aujourd'hui Béatrix est dans tout l'éclat de sa beauté. Réponds-moi vite.

TON PAUVRE JACQUES.

VII

Par dépêche.

À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN:

Épouse, mon ami, épouse. Qu'importe demain? Les plus belles fleurs n'ont qu'un matin de vie.

EDMOND.

VIII

Aix-les-Bains, 7 septembre, 1901.
À MONSIEUR EDMOND DANTON:

Tout est fini. Je n'épouse pas. J'ai été lâche. J'avais fait le rêve chimérique d'une beauté qui durerait tou-

jours. Ce que tu me dis n'est possible qu'avec les beautés médiocres.

Celle-ci est trop parfaite, je souffrirais trop. Je pars pour toujours d'Aix-les-Bains. Je vais chez toi pour oublier. *Par dépêche.* À MONSIEUR JACQUES MAURIN: Je t'attends, mais tu n'es qu'un sot. EDMOND.

JACQUES.

IX



THE CITY SLAVE

HERE in the city street,
Through tumult, glare and heat,
Through the endless strife and din,
Come songs of Summer, who waits
An idler without the gates
And who will not enter in.

And I, her worshipper,
May see no more of her
Than glimpse through the blurred pane gives—
Over pave and brick, the high,
Exquisite blue of her sky,
To tell me she laughs and lives.

I hunger for a sight
Of her region of delight,
Of her widespread, free demesne;
For the touch of winds that wing
Through the bloom and blossoming
Of the lands where she is queen.

Once, like a messenger,
Came a swift breeze from her
That whispered: “Hear and rejoice!
She bids thee arise and speed
And follow the path I lead—
She calls thee with my voice.

“Oh, follow, follow me—
My way is to the sea,
To the gold of sun-warmed sands;
Where the long waves curl and break
Waits Summer for thy poor sake,
With flower-laden hands.”

I, who am pulse and part
Of the crowded street and mart,
Alas, can I heed or turn?
Oh, Summer, as one accurst,
For sight of thy smile I thirst—
From my chains I lean and yearn.

JOHN WINWOOD.

THE ERROR OF HER WAYS

By May Austin Low

THE affair began in the little Chamby Church near the syringa trees.

It was a Sunday morning in early June, and the air was so slightly stirred by the breath of the West that there was not a ripple on the lake, that lay clear as a mirror in the sun, reflecting the glory of the green shores and the dark blue mountains in the distance.

There was an unusually large congregation in the little church, accounted for by the beauty of the day and the interest in the new clergyman, who had only the week before taken up his abode in the old red-brick rectory; and last, but not least, by the appearance there of pretty little Mrs. de Freyne who, with her husband, had taken "The Wigwam" by the Rapids for the Summer months. At least half a dozen lorgnettes had discerned her tall figure crossing the old parade ground, and she might have been drilled by the way she carried herself.

Mrs. de Freyne had been shown by the pompous verger into one of the high, old-fashioned pews, and had paid due attention to the prayers and psalms, but when it came to the sermon her thoughts wandered.

The new clergyman was a success as regards earnestness and eloquence. He preached of the joys of Paradise with a heavenly light illuminating his features and the conviction that the truth that came from his soul must enter the hearts of his audience.

There were some young girls stirred to momentary ardor by his address, and the men admired his fire and fervor. The well-dressed women lis-

tened languidly; the Paradise they longed for was one that would restore their lost youth and make them once more attractive to men.

But to Mrs. de Freyne, so vividly conscious of her youth and beauty and the power thereof, the discourse had merely a musical rhythm that made a pleasing accompaniment to her thoughts. She thought of the little cottage by the Rapids, with its broad veranda and swinging hammocks and sweet flowers; of the hedge of roses in the garden, and a volume of Swinburne's poems she had been reading after breakfast. She thought of a new frock of pure white silk with gauze trimmings, which had arrived for her the night before, and in which her husband had said she looked like a water lily—a very nice thing for him to say; men aren't often poetical to their wives.

She was wondering what on earth she should do with herself after a week if there was no one to amuse her, when a man on the other side of the aisle caught her glance. Instantly she was another being.

There was no danger of dulness now, for instantly she knew, with woman's infallible intuition, that he admired her. She wished she hadn't dressed so dowdily—all in black, as if afraid of trusting her discrimination in colors. But then black set off her dead-gold hair, and the crimson poppies in her hat were an effective bit of coloring.

Was he looking at her still? She would just glance at him once again to find out. She was not disappointed.

At that moment the clergyman brought his sermon to a close; the

collection was taken up by the pompous *verger*, a hymn was sung with much heartiness, the blessing given in solemn tones, and Mrs. de Freyne found herself among the society few that lingered last.

"What did you think of our service?" asked a middle-aged woman with a distinguished air, stepping across the aisle to shake hands with her, while the young man she had noticed followed them closely down the church.

"Quite charming," said Mrs. de Freyne, as if passing a verdict on a new novel. "I enjoyed the sermon greatly, and—and everything."

"You must let me introduce my cousin to you," said Mrs. Wentworth, turning as they reached the steps to the young man in their wake. "It isn't often that he is lured to church, but the new clergyman attracted quite a large congregation."

The young man bowed low, and answered, with a slight smile: "It isn't often one has anything so attractive as—our new clergyman."

"I'll make you a frightful confession," said Mrs. de Freyne, as he followed her through the gate. "I think clergymen the most unattractive of all things created. Why should there be so much strength about a doctor's appearance and so much weakness about the men who preach the Gospel?"

"It's perhaps the way they look at things," said Arthur Wentworth. "Of course, a clergyman is in a hard position. No better, by nature, than other men, he has eternally to think of setting a proper example."

"Men take things so much more seriously than women," she said, reflectively; "I suppose that is why a man is content to appear what he is, while a woman wishes to be considered either better or worse than she may be."

"Which is your desire?" he asked, with a strange smile, looking down at her yellow hair.

"Oh, I pose as a saint, of course. I'm a model wife—I should have been a model mother had nature permitted. As it is, I have a little dog that I adore.

It's quite a case of love me, love my dog; and anyone that Snap doesn't approve of I doubt at once."

"It isn't exactly an encouraging name—to the timid of heart. Was he christened after his character was formed—or from prognostication?"

"Come, now, I thought men were never ill-natured. Wait till you see my little angel, and your conscience will smite you."

"And when may I see him?"

"Your cousin is coming to call on me to-morrow; if you really wish to see Snap—" hesitatingly.

"I might come with her to-morrow—and afterward?"

"Oh, that would depend on Snap's approval of you."

She laughed a gay little laugh, without any guile, giving him a glimpse of perfect teeth and a delicious dimple near her mouth.

"You see, I'm never lonely on Sunday, because Samuel is with me—Samuel is my husband," she explained; "but the rest of the week is a dull affair unless people take pity on my loneliness."

"Are you fond of boating? I brought a boat from Montreal."

"I love the water." She came to a standstill between the barracks, where she could see the quiet lake beyond the foaming Rapids. "This is an ideal place for a Summer holiday. Why did I never come here before?"

"Why not, indeed? Before you had Snap—or . . ."

He paused, and she knew as well as did he what he had left unsaid. She took no umbrage, but laughed merrily. The dimple at each corner of her mouth was certainly bewitching.

The man found himself wondering why another man's wife should always be so very attractive—if attractive at all. Was there magic in the marriage service?

He walked with her to the little gate leading to "The Wigwam" and turned to take off his hat a second time as she disappeared across the broad veranda.

Samuel was ensconced in a huge

rattan chair on the side overlooking the Rapids. He was smoking a very good cigar and reading a very bad book.

"Oh, you wicked boy!" exclaimed his wife, alluding to his cigar, for she affected to disapprove of anything stronger than a cigarette.

Her tone pleased him. It is soothing to a man's feelings to be called a boy when he is on the wrong side of forty, just as a woman revels in being addressed as "my dear child" when she has forgotten what it is to feel young.

"You survived the service?" he queried, taking her slender hand in his fat, gigantic palm.

She thought of Arthur Wentworth's hands, which showed clearly an artistic temperament.

"Well—rather! Such an entrancing sermon, and the dearest little church! The leaves rustled outside the open windows and sounded like whispers from heaven."

"The parson said nothing more poetical than that, I'll be bound."

"It didn't strike me that there was anything particularly poetical about him," she mused.

"But you said his sermon was entrancing."

"Oh, I was thinking of someone else. I've become acquainted with two members of Chambly society—a Mrs. Wentworth and her cousin, Arthur Wentworth."

"I knew a Chambly Wentworth a very long time ago; his name was Sydney—a fine fellow he was, too—and my father knew his father before him, and his grandfather, too—William and Thomas by baptism." He was somewhat proud of his memory for names as well as faces.

"And Thomas begat William and William begat Sydney and Sydney begat Arthur—and really it seems to me he was worth *begatting*."

"Your frivolity, Aimée, is limitless." He smiled adoringly up into his wife's fair face, for her frivolities were very dear to his stolid soul. "Well, my dear, you can amuse yourself with this boy when I'm not here—"

the old conditions—"but these boys bother me; they are like puppies, always getting in the way."

"We find anyone in the way when we two are alone," she said, in a cooing voice. She pushed a footstool toward his chair and sat at his feet, with her elbows resting on his knees and her face in her hands. "What a bore business is, Samuel, dear! Couldn't you sometimes let it slide?"

"Then where would your pretty frocks come from? No, my dear, we must keep sentiment for Sundays—but by all means let us have it then—"

A bell sounded, and they went in to dinner, hand in hand, like children.

In a country place, with few women and fewer men as inhabitants, there is always more or less gossip over the doings of one's neighbors. Larger places, of course, have their character side-lights, but the focus of a primitive village is far more searching and severe.

The de Freynes had not been in Chambly more than a month before public attention was riveted on the wife's flirtation with Arthur Wentworth. If he walked over to "The Wigwam" and spent the morning on the shady veranda, in the glow and glory of her blue eyes, the fact was sure to be known all over the place before dinner time.

And as he spent many mornings undisturbed, it at last dawned on them that someone in the community ought to interfere. But who? Her rightful protector, if he was aware of the state of affairs, made no sign. Who, then, could be better chosen for such a mission than the paid protector of their souls?

So the little clergyman was interviewed, the case laid before him, and his clerical conscience so disturbed that he ate no breakfast and presented himself at "The Wigwam" gate just at dinner time, as deplorable looking an object of humanity as could be well imagined. Mrs. de Freyne came forward on the veranda and stood awaiting him, looking the

embodiment of health and happiness, her fine figure, in its stainless white frock, outlined against the dark green leaves.

"You have come at last," she said, as if his coming had been hourly longed for, "and at the right time, too. I had just persuaded Mr. Wentworth to partake of my dinner of herbs, and you must join us. Then, at least, we shall be sure of the presence of brotherly love."

"You—er—are very good," he said, feebly. He hadn't come to tell her that; but what a delicious aroma there was of salmon and cucumber! And he had eaten no breakfast.

They went immediately into the dining-room, where dinner was served on fine and faultless damask, and a jardinière full of freshly culled cabbage roses stirred the senses with delight. The two French windows were thrown wide, and not only the sound but the sight of the Rechelieu Rapids added to their enjoyment.

"I verily believe I'm greedy!" cried Mrs. de Freyne, gaily, helping the Rev. William Chester to a second slice of salmon.

"Here I am with two men for dinner—and how many cavalierless tables there must be in Chambly to-day! I might have sent over for one of the Westover girls, but Mr. Wentworth declares he doesn't like bread-and-butter misses. As for you, Mr. Chester, I know you have the charity that covers a multitude of—women, and it wouldn't matter to you whether a girl had red hair and a random eye, or—the form of a Hebe."

She looked at him round the cabbage roses with bright and mocking eyes.

"I pride myself on my appreciation of the beautiful," said the Rev. William, with some dignity, having found that salmon is good for the spirit. "I don't maintain that godliness is by nature allied to ugliness, but while the beauty of the body may satisfy the senses, the soul sees deeper beneath the flesh that fails, and is never satisfied until—"

"That's it," interrupted Mrs. de

Freyne; "the soul, they say, is never satisfied, and I'm an example of Carlyle's theory that there is no such thing as a feminine soul; I am always satisfied, and I can't imagine anyone being happier than I when I've a new dress or a new book, or—"

She paused, and Arthur Wentworth said, with a dubious smile:

"A new victim to your charms."

He departed as soon as the dinner was over, and the little clergyman had the field all to himself.

They went out on the veranda, and she made him take the big rattan chair, while she sat at his feet on the edge of the veranda, leaning her head against the tall pillar, with her hands clasped across her knees and a very amused expression in her bright blue eyes.

"Now," she said, "you have a chance of making your enemy your footstool."

Undoubtedly he blushed. Had she already defined what he had to say?

"My dear lady," he said, "do you wish to be my enemy?—or the enemy of anyone?"

"Not yours, perhaps; but really, enemies are interesting, and it's everything—everything to be amused."

"We look at life from a different standpoint. It is everything to be good. I am convinced," he went on, with that clerical contraction of the larynx so irritating to the laity, "that the mistake people make is in not recognizing the danger in little things. The fascinating beginning of a flirtation, for instance, before you go any further—"

"Is it a sermon?" queried Mrs. de Freyne, with a slight arching of her eyebrows and a brilliant smile. "Before you go any further do tell me how you came to know of the fascination of beginnings?"

But the little clergyman was in earnest. He felt the woman's personal magnetism even as he reprimanded her—knew that her subtle feminine wit could outdo him at every turn; and yet he went on, because he had a soul to save and believed in his mission.

"It's quite funny," she said, "and perhaps not quite nice to be told you are not good; it really makes one wish to be—naughtier."

She pulled to pieces a huge Virginia vine leaf as she spoke.

"Hush!" he exclaimed. "You are taking what I have to say quite wrong-ly. I would only ask you to abstain from the appearance of evil."

"What would you have one do? I do my duty by my husband—even you must admit that. I darn his socks—such big ones I sometimes have to finish them on Sunday—I keep his cupboards tidy, I sort his ties, I cut his papers, I make his coffee and keep his house charming. What more do the soul-savers of this community desire of me?"

"That you do not spend hours alone with a man who is not your husband."

"And I maintain that it is no one's business but my own and my husband's."

"Which means—?"

"That you make a great mistake in preaching out of the pulpit."

Then she came down from her dignity and coldness and gave him a cup of tea sweetened with three lumps of sugar, as an offering of peace, she explained, which he accepted and sipped humbly, though he hadn't had sugar in his tea since he left off bibs and tuckers, and abhorred it.

But when he was leaving he leaned over the little gate and took up the old theme for a brief moment.

"I pray you to consider my words—"

"And I haven't considered *you*! Here I have been allowing you to risk your reputation by spending more than an hour alone with me."

As the little clergyman walked across the Common he thought to himself: "Surely a woman with eyes like hers must have a soul!"

Matters came to a climax one day when Samuel arrived by an earlier train than usual and found "The Wigwam" deserted, save for Snap, who had overturned the pink jardinière in his displeasure at being shut

in the dining-room, and Philomene, the pretty French maid-of-all-work, who had the natural leaning toward excitement innate in her race, and who thought it was time the jealous husband should appear on the scene. So she met her master's inquiries with enough explanation to set his smouldering jealousy ablaze.

Madame had gone out with Monsieur Wentworth soon after dinner. He used to come and be content to sit on the veranda and smoke, but lately they had always gone out. To-day they must have gone on the water, for he carried a paddle over his shoulder. If Monsieur had the opera glass perhaps he could find out. And the next moment Samuel was scanning the water for his recreant wife.

What he saw or did not see was sufficient at least to keep him tramping up and down the veranda till an hour later, when his wife came, with wind-tossed hair and shining eyes, to greet him. But he waved her away, and gave her no chance to vindicate herself by words. So she stood silently by one of the broad pillars, with tightly clasped hands and strange eyes, till he had said what he had to say.

"I'll have an end of this at once. No shilly-shallying now, Aimée. You cut the fellow direct, or—I'll know the reason why. You choose between him and me. You'll have leisure to decide while I'm away, for I'm going back to town now, and shall return to-morrow night." There was a whistle at that moment from the incoming train, and snatching up his handbag he hurried off toward the station. Mrs. de Freyne's mind had been made up from the first moment. She had grown to abhor her husband. A man may have half a dozen flirtations, and yet be more than content with his wife—as his wife; but no woman tolerates her husband when she has a penchant for another man.

Hadn't Arthur said over and over again how he loved her—how he would die for her? Now he should know he had only to live for her.

She enjoyed writing the note to him explaining the state of affairs. It

was a picturesque and intense moment. She wrote eagerly at a little rustic table on the veranda, while the sound of the Rapids filled the air and the perfume of the cabbage roses stole on her senses.

In the morning she sent the note by her maid, who delivered it safely into his hands.

Then she busied herself with preparations for departure. She had told him to meet her at the old Fort at four o'clock that afternoon. No one would think it strange for them to be going for a row at that hour, and how easily they could go across the lake in his boat and take the train at Belœil!

Waiting for him at the old Fort even before the appointed hour she could see him coming in the distance. He wore flannels and carried a fishing basket over his arm.

"How well he dissimulates!" she thought, devouring him with her eyes. Even at that distance the sight of his physical beauty stirred her oddly.

It was only when he had sprung into his boat and pushed from shore that the truth struck her—he was going La Cache fishing. What an answer to her impassioned note!

She cowered in the shadow of the

old Fort wall, that he might not see her; but when at last she retraced her steps homeward she was not unobserved.

A pretty little married woman to amuse one during Summer hours, with dainty dinners served for two within sound of the Rechelieu Rapids, and always that husband as the impassable barrier and safe dividing line—was quite different from the pretty little woman as a fixture. And so he had torn her note to pieces and turned his attention to his fishing tackle.

When Samuel got to "The Wig-wam" that evening he found a pale and penitent wife awaiting him, who tearfully threw herself into his arms.

"Darling, I've decided—he—he was all very well to—to flirt with—but as a husband you alone are the man I can love," she said.

Samuel kissed her tenderly and lovingly, and his pride in his wife was considerably augmented when a little later they met Arthur Wentworth on the Common, and she gave him the cut direct.

The little clergyman, who was also passing at the moment, offered up a thanksgiving from his heart that she had been brought to see the error of her ways.



NIGHT IN THE CITY

NIIGHT, weary raven, worn but watchful still,
Gathers beneath her wings the world of men.
The selfish brood despoils her peace, until
The patient mother flies away again.

FRANK WALCOTT HUTT.



SOCIAL OBLIGATION

LITTLE ELMER—Papa, why is it more blessed to give than to receive?
PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—Because, my son, if you permit yourself to receive you are compelled to give about three times as much in return in order to properly express your gratitude.

PAQUITA, THE DANCER

By Mrs. Maraquita Bangs

SLENDER as a reed, lithe as a willow, restless as a wind-blown flower, with purple shadows in the beautiful eyes, a crown of blue-black hair softly shading the low white brow, crimson mobile lips that smiled at you and at the same time drew a sob into your throat—that was Paquita. Half of London was raving about her—that half which seeks ever the new star, the professional beauty or the latest sensation.

The last night of the opera at Covent Garden had drawn a splendid audience. The boxes and stalls fairly blazed with color, and the animation of the women in their décolleté gowns was accentuated by the flashing of jewels as their wearers chatted in restless expectancy. All London seemed to be represented. In the gallery, in the pit and in the stalls, one name was on every tongue—Paquita. The music of the opera was barely heard. The artists entrusted with the leading rôles received only perfunctory recognition. Everyone waited for the ballet and the incomparable Paquita.

Lord Merivale and his beautiful wife occupied a proscenium box. He had represented the borough of Langley for nearly twenty years, and he was looked on in the House of Commons as the coming leader of his party. His steadfastness of purpose, his oratorical ability and his unimpeachable morals made him a power. Lord Cowardin, their guest, a handsome man of thirty or thereabouts, made no effort to conceal his impatience to see again the bewitching Paquita. Lady Merivale smiled with middle-aged indulgence at his enthu-

siasm. In her estimation, ballet dancers were not real persons; they were simply essential if extraordinary effects, belonging in the category with the Gilded Dragon and the Fountain of Golden Rain.

Lord Merivale stood behind his wife's chair, hidden from the view of the audience by heavy velvet curtains. Tall and dignified of bearing, his hair tinged with gray, his face calm and handsome, he looked an ideal leader of men. He, too, was waiting and watching for Paquita. Could his wife have looked into the deep-set gray eyes she would have been startled. This serious man with the weight of fifty years on his strong shoulders was struggling with turbulent memories of the scenes of his youth. He saw another Paquita. Against his will he recalled the sweet, pleading face of her, that other, the mother of this new danseuse for whom he and the eager crowd were waiting. One by one reminiscences of that far-off time of youthful folly ranged themselves in startling tableaux wherein he and that other Paquita were the leading figures.

When a young man, and while sojourning in Paris, he had followed the fashion and paid court to the beautiful danseuse then the reigning queen of the ballet. She, ignorant and untrained, had flung all the love of her passionate nature at the feet of the young Englishman. Then a dream of folly lasting many months came to an end. Lord Merivale returned to England to begin his career and to marry the fair Isabel, daughter of the Earl of Marden. He left with his bankers in Paris a large sum

of money to be used by the danseuse for the maintenance of the little Paquita, born two weeks before his departure, and whose advent the young mother had hailed with delight. She had been sure, then, that he would never leave her, impractical mother of Paquita! Born of heaven knew whom, she could not understand her lover's desertion. She beat out her young heart against the relentless problem of woman's love and man's perfidy, and died leaving the little Paquita to the care of her old dancing master, and commanding her to the keeping of Mary, the Mother of God.

The discreet lawyers who managed the affair for Lord Merivale informed him twice a year, as a matter of business, of the whereabouts of the little Paquita, but he had never thought it wise or necessary to see her. On this last night of the opera, however, he had yielded to the pressure of his friends and to a latent interest to see this living link to his past. The ballet music began, and a bright red burned on the brow of the dignified Member of Parliament. In his heart was something like fear. His wife leaned back to speak to him. "Is it not pitiful to see so much excitement over a dancing woman? Will the people ever be serious?" she asked.

Lord Merivale's answer was lost in the tumult of applause that greeted Paquita as she daintily pirouetted toward the footlights. He strove to conquer the conflicting emotions that the sight of the lovely dancer raised in his breast. Her beauty appealed to him; her apparent fragility awoke an unwelcome feeling of pain; a certain air of reserve, a more than hint of high breeding about her, smote him with reproach, and he trembled at a new suggestion of responsibility. The witchery of her smile caught him, and his cool, stout heart leaped with admiration. A longing to cry out aloud that the radiant creature was his child possessed him. His self-control nearly forsook him. The red in his brow spread from cheek to chin. Shame flung out her dusky banner. The

folly of the past now assumed the aspect of a crime. He shrank back into the shadow of the velvet curtains.

Lord Cowardin stood up, heedless of decorum, and greatly to Lady Merivale's discomfiture, shouted "Brava!" There was a recognizing flash from the dark eyes, and Paquita vanished from the scene. The Earl of Marden with one or two friends entered the box. The old man was florid and moist with excitement. "Begad, I have never seen her equal!" he said, as he took the chair Lord Cowardin had vacated. "Merivale, you will be forever in my debt. If I had not insisted you would not be here, and you would not have seen Paquita!"

"I am going to the green-room to say a word of congratulation," Lord Cowardin interjected, and, to his intense surprise, the staid Member from Langley rose to join him, saying, "Yes, I, also, must see her!"

The enthusiasm from the theatre was bubbling over into the green-room. Lord Merivale paused at the entrance. His self-consciousness almost forced him to retreat; but the notes of a flute-like voice floated toward him and held him there in helpless confusion. He struggled to maintain an appearance of the dignified calm he did not feel; but the melting cadence of the girlish voice, that even in merriest chatter carried a hint of tears, made his effort at self-control only partially successful. It awoke in him an importunate need, an almost unquenchable thirst for recognition. He tasted the agony of denied fatherhood. The crowd of men, young and old, began to disperse, and Lord Cowardin, who had mingled with them, beckoned to Lord Merivale.

As he was introduced the young girl gave him her hand. He grasped the slim fingers and held them for a moment, struggling to find some trivial word to say. The effort failed. Presently he released the little hand; but he knew that he should bear its impress forever on his heart. Lord Cowardin noticed his perturbation, and misunderstood. He immediately

assumed a possessive attitude, which he intended should enlighten Lord Merivale.

Paquita was conscious of the strangeness in the manner of her new acquaintance; but breaking two rosebuds from a bouquet lying near, she said, archly: "I hear the music beginning for the next act. You must permit me to decorate you before you go."

She stood first before Lord Merivale to fix the bud in the lapel of his coat. Lord Cowardin smiled cynically as he looked at the picture they made—the girl tall and slim in her gauzy skirts and pink fleshings, standing before the stalwart, dignified Member for Langley. As for Lord Merivale, he needed all his strength of will to refrain from taking the fair form in his arms and claiming his own. It was the supercilious smile on Lord Cowardin's face that brought him to a realization of what he was contemplating. He found strength to say, however, "You do me too much honor," and bowing stiffly, he moved toward the door.

Paquita, embarrassed, turned toward Lord Cowardin. She held the flower up and was about to place it in his coat.

"No, no," he said. "Give it to me as a token." He kissed her hand as she blushingly complied. There was an expression of such absolute faith in her eyes as she turned them full on Lord Cowardin's face that for the moment he was startled. Brusquely, almost, he shook hands with her, saying, as he did so, "To-morrow."

Paquita, bewildered, watched his going, her mobile lips parted with surprise. She recovered quickly, and clasping her hands on her heart, she said, softly: "He loves me! He does love me!"

Lord Merivale sat in the library of his club, looking worn and ill at ease. His equilibrium was not yet restored, nor was its restoration aided by the entrance of Lord Cowardin. He beat a tattoo on the table with his long white fingers, and his face was pale and set. It was evident, as Lord Cowardin threw himself into a chair,

that he, too, was chagrined about something.

"Do you know," he began, rather petulantly, "do you know that little Paquita is a consummate actress?"

"Is she?" Lord Merivale returned, as his face grew a shade paler.

"Yes. I called on her this afternoon, early. I had made arrangements to take her for a little trip to Paris, and went to tell her so. I broached the matter with great skill, I thought. She seemed not to understand at first."

An awful fear showed on Lord Merivale's face as he listened, but he waited for Cowardin to continue.

"It was all pretense, of course," he went on, presently. "At length, however, she did understand what I really meant, and then, by Jove, instead of behaving sensibly, she acted—well, as if she were a person of some importance—told me I had insulted her and all that sort of thing—talked of honor and all that, you know. She was perfectly impracticable. I want to help her, of course. The trip would benefit her."

Lord Merivale sat with murder in his heart; but his respectability, his reputation and the situation made him afraid.

"I took my hat to leave," Lord Cowardin continued, "believing that she was making a scene for her own profit, when she flung herself on a couch and began to weep violently. I had seen that sort of thing so often, you know, that I came away. I shall see her again. She is too beautiful and too clever! Besides, I really can help her. She interests me."

Lord Merivale did not move or speak. The sin of his youth was holding him by the throat. Lord Cowardin, unconscious of the effect of his words, rose to go, and as he passed Lord Merivale he leaned over his shoulder in a youthful, patronizing way. "I really beg your pardon," he said, "for boring you with my foolish affairs. I ought to have remembered that such things are caviare to you. We shall meet at Marden Court this evening. *Au revoir!*"

As Lord Cowardin left the room, Lord Merivale rose to his feet, and striking the table with his clenched hand, cried: "Caviare? Damn you, this is hell! burning hell!" Then he added, with an air of resolution: "I must save her from that, and I will!"

The dinner at Marden Court that evening was almost a family affair. Lord and Lady Merivale and Lord Cowardin, who was a great favorite of the old Earl, were the only guests except the Honorable James Danesfield, one of the Ministry and an old friend of Lord Merivale. The old Earl was in good humor, and told stories of the time when he was a lieutenant in the Scots Fusiliers, and of the hot work they had in quelling the Indian Mutiny. He reveled in reminiscences of Cawnpore and Delhi. The more recent wars in Abyssinia, Zululand and the Soudan were small affairs, in his estimation. The dinner was nearly over when a chance remark of Lady Merivale about the opera dismounted the Earl from his hobby.

"Music, begad!" the Earl exclaimed. "I don't believe I heard a note of it. It was that little dancer! Did you ever see such dancing? Danesfield, you should have seen her; perhaps you did, though?"

"No," he began, with the deliberation that had led them to call him "Dribble" in the House—"no, I do not frequent such places. I think,

however, I saw something about the young person you allude to in this evening's paper as I came down in the late train. The name was a foreign one, 'Paquita,' I believe."

"Yes," the old Earl returned, unctuously. "Paquita is her name. What was it the paper said?"

"It was about her, I imagine. It appeared from the headlines that she destroyed herself this afternoon!"

Lord Cowardin started and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Earl of Marden. "Are you sure?"

"I am sure the paper said she was dead. I did not read the particulars. Details of that sort are not to my liking."

"Nor to mine," said Lady Merivale. "Those people are doing something shocking always. They are abnormal, and really out of the pale of ordinary sympathy."

Lord Merivale trembled like a man with ague. He reached for a glass of wine, but his shaking fingers succeeded only in overturning the glass. The wine flowed across the table in a blood-red line between himself and Lord Cowardin, who sat opposite.

Lady Merivale, noticing the accident, remarked with wifely solicitude to the Cabinet Minister: "Really, you know, I think Merivale has been working too hard. I shall be glad when Parliament adjourns, so that we may get away to the Riviera."



FORTUNATE IGNORANCE

BIBBS—No man knows himself.

GIBBS—That's so. He would lose his best friend if he did.



FRIENDLY INTEREST

GRACE—Why do you persist in repeating that awful scandal about Lucy?

MAY—I'm trying to find out if there is any truth in it.

A HEAD OF PAN

By McCrea Pickering

*LEERING down on book and man
Mouths and mocks the face of Pan.*

By some master wrought and planned,
Bought and brought from over seas,
Cast in plaster by some hand
Skilled in careful mimicries;
Purchased on a city street
For a dingy coin and small,
Hung where desk and window meet
High upon my study wall.

Wrinkled brow and pointed ears,
Curly beard and sprouting horn,
And a mocking mouth that jeers
Generations yet unborn;
Grinning lips and slanting eyes,
Cunning look that fain would say:
“ Fool, I knew life’s master-lies
When to-day was yesterday.”

Lofty dream and tender thought—
How he mocks them every one—
And the story comes to naught,
And the poem dies undone;
And I blush to meet his grin
As he counts their worth again,
Chuckling at the petty sin
Of the little pride of men.

Epicure and pessimist—
Laugh the vanity of me—
Still I struggle to resist
Spell of thy philosophy.
Some day I shall write the word,
And my heart shall know its worth,
Nor my conscious soul be stirred
At thy mockery and mirth.

Some day—“ Nay, what use of it?”
So he preaches to me still;
“ Who shall profit by thy wit—
Live and laugh and love thy fill!”

So a silent war we wage—
 Still he sneers and still I strive—
 And he leers at pen and page
 And at every man alive.

*Narrowed, careless sight that sees
 Through so many centuries,
 Are you right, then, after all?
 Tell me, Pan upon the wall!*



A VIRTUOSO ON GOLF

GOLF—have I tried him? *Hellas, oui, mon cher!* I have my firs' and las' experience wiz zat game. Shall I tell you how it was, *hein?* Ze morning I make ze grand play seem most propeetious, ze wind in ze green overhead sigh *dolcemente*, ze birds zey carrol *capriccioso*, and ever-zing it was most lovely—yes. I have often watch ze play, and it seem quite *facile*, so I say, “Ha, I, too, win ze championsheep.” *Eh bien!*

Full of ze sublime confeedence, I walk *allegro* through ze crowd of players to ze practice tee. *Poco-a-poco* I assume ze proper pose. Ze *maestro* he stand before me *maestoso* to give me ze instruction. He place ze ball *resoluto* upon ze tee, and I swing ze club *adagio*. “*Pianissimo!*” he caution me. “Slow back, don’t press, and keep ze eye on ze ball!” I bring my club back over my shoulder *molto adagio*, and I endeavor to astonish ze audience by a drive of marvelous distance, but in ze effort to strike ze ball *furioso* I pass over him entire, and ze crowd laugh, while ze *maestro* tell me *crescendo* to keep my eye on ze ball.

Resoluto I again draw my club back *poco largo* and once more I strike, but zis time *rallentando*, topping him and sending him just off ze tee. Ze crowd laugh again, and my heart beat *furioso*, and I swear ze great cuss word.

“*Poco-a-poco*, you will get him,” say ze *maestro*, *dolcemente*, and I try him again—several time I try him. I bring my club down *stringendo* and pass over zat ball as if he was not zere.

Ze *maestro* he lose his temper, ze same as me. *Con tutta forza*, “Be sharp and keep ze eye on ze ball!” he exclaim, while I answer, *espressivo*, “I have no luck!” *Resoluto* I once more draw my club back, zis time *poco più allegro*, and aim at ze ball *molto furioso*, but I miss him altogezzer, yes, while ze force of ze grand stroke whirl me around and I fan ze air *a tempo*. Ze *maestro* say *andantino con sentimento*, “Try again.” “Never!” I say, and I pitch ze club *con strepito* into ze lake. Zen ze crowd it cheer, but zere was no encore, no. Zat golf, ah, *mon Dieu!* I have no more of him!

ROWENA NEW BURFORD.



CHASING THE FOXY

SHE—Is your friend going to marry the widow?
 HE—I think not. He told me he had a better offer.

NAMING THE NOVEL

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS

By Livingston Hunt

HENRY (*condescendingly*) — My dear lady, I want you to give me an idea in return for the many I have given you. I am writing a story, and can't, for the life of me, think of a title for it. Can you help me?

EDITH—What is the story about?

HENRY—I really don't know. I am half through it, and there are some elusive human beings in it—ghosts of men and women; and there is an English country house with a host and hostess who are never seen, and there is also a splendid description of a single idea which runs through ninety-two pages and leaves you exactly where you began.

EDITH (*musing*)—Are there any characters in it who—pardon the vulgarity of the thought—who work for a living?

HENRY (*hastily*)—Good heavens, no!

EDITH—Then why don't you call it “The Hand of Little Employment?”

HENRY (*pleased*)—Thank you, my dear lady; you are coming on. But your suggestion leads to another even better. Why wouldn't “The Daintier Sense” be a charming name for a story? It bears no particular relation to anything in the book, and will do splendidly. I'll take it.

EDITH—I think it would not be exactly fair to take that title, for it smacks too much of me. You mustn't forget that I have a very pretty knack in comparatives and superlatives, and I don't want you to interfere with it. Have you forgotten my story of “The Baser Hope,” and of “The Spine of the Least Consistence?”

HENRY (*paternally*)—My child, you

need not worry yourself with the idea that anyone will ever be reminded of you when they pick up me. Besides, it is hardly grateful in you to find fault with anything I do in the literary line. Only recall to mind the circumstances of your progress up the difficult steep of authorship, and then remember whose hand it was that helped you.

EDITH (*subdued*)—You are right, and I am deeply indebted to you, for are you not my Sacred Fount? Take any title you like for your book, and I shall have no right to object. But I, too, am writing a story, and like yourself, I need a name. What would you suggest?

HENRY—The opposite of what it stands for. That is, provided it stands for anything. (*Confidentially*) Does it?

EDITH—I am not quite certain. It began with real human beings, with a touch of flesh and blood about them, though not enough to hurt. Their emotions are very feeble, yet they take themselves very seriously.

HENRY (*alarmed*)—Do you mean to say there is a central idea?

EDITH—Yes, there is; although, of course, it is deeply veiled. Here it is: A very clever married man thinks he would like to be very naughty, but shudders at the thought of having to make up his mind on the matter before the Autumn, when they will all go to Italy.

HENRY—“They” go to Italy? Who are “they”?

EDITH—Why, the would-be *ménage à trois à la turque*, of course, you stupid man! And the reason for the

husband's indecision and distress is that his wife is always so adorable in Italy. Italy brings her out; psychologically speaking, it makes another woman of her.

HENRY—Very pretty, but a little too definite. Can't you lose the central idea?

EDITH—I have already.

HENRY (*reassured*)—Oh, that's all right. Then call it "The Undistributed Middle."

EDITH—Lovely! Or, how would "The Minor Premise" do?

HENRY—Or "Harp and Hand," provided there is no harp anywhere in the neighborhood.

EDITH—Or "The Level of Pity," that not meaning anything.

HENRY—Why wouldn't "The Softer Shoulder" be very neat?

EDITH (*shocked*)—That is a little too—er—specific, don't you think?

HENRY—Perhaps it is. How would "An Offense Against Substance" sound?

EDITH—Certainly that is excruciatingly inapplicable, but "The Weaker Vessel" seems to me better.

HENRY (*almost with contempt*)—Too banal, and has no inventiveness, either. "The Trick of Distance" would be neater and yet vague enough; also "The Circled Square." "Mahomet's Coffin" may seem unsuitable, but if your story ends in the air and is buried there the name would apply, and at the same time its applicability would always remain your own sweet secret.

EDITH—How would "The Bloom of Age" do?

HENRY—Fair. Try again; I like to see your progress.

EDITH—Well, "The Poised Fist?"

HENRY (*frowning*)—Bad.

EDITH—How do you like "The Wincing Point?"

HENRY—Dreadful! It reminds one of the dentist's chair.

EDITH—Does "The Mesh of Circumstance" sound worthy of your tutelage?

HENRY—Stale, my dear lady, stale! You are running down. The next thing you will be suggesting will be "The Pleasant Wish," or "The Pretty Thing," or "The Nice Idea." You are disgracing me!

EDITH (*appealingly*)—I am doing my best. How would "The Shadow of a Predilection" fit the case?

HENRY (*rising impatiently*)—If you go on like that I shall begin to believe you really wrote "An English-woman's Love Letters," and good God! that is a terrible thing to say of anybody!

EDITH (*shuddering*)—Anything but that! I may be a bore, but not of that calibre!

HENRY (*inspired*)—Then call your book "The Wrong Gimlet."

EDITH (*seriously*)—Thank you. You have done me a real service.

(*Henry takes her hand to say goodbye, raises it to within a foot of his lips and solemnly kisses the air. He then departs. She gazes after him in adoration.*)

INDEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

LADY (*to clerk in clothing store*)—I want a pair of trousers for my husband.

CLERK—What size, madam?

LADY—I don't know the size, but he wears a fifteen collar.



WHEN HIS LIGHT WENT OUT

RURAL YOUTH—I shall never forget the blow that killed father.

CITY MAIDEN—Was he asphyxiated?

THE SMART SET

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MISS SYLVESTER'S MARRIAGE

By Cecil Charles

THE innumerable tucks in the sleeves of her chiffon bodice appeared to fascinate the dark foreigner; he bent over her constantly. The music went on vaguely, murmurously, and the chiffon seemed to float in time to its rhythm. She was an uncommon figure, with an airiness and grace altogether charming. Her throat and neck were smooth and delicate, but not fragile; her arms were beyond criticism; her skin had a satiny gloss, striking in contrast with her black hair and dark eyes; her eyebrows were straight and her lashes long and fine; her nose was as perfect as Psyche's and her mouth tropical. Her gown was yellow, and she wore a pearl or two, being a young lady of taste as well as a niece of Mrs. Sevenbanks and a daughter of the late Francis Sylvester, Esq.

The foreigner was not the only one susceptible to the influence of her chiffon aura; a couple of average young dancing men, dallying in the doorway, exchanged consoling confidences.

"Nerve? Well, rather. Not the girl's fault. Where is the old lady?"

"The old lady has got hold of old Clifford. Awfully good sort of chaperon! But who is the freak, you know? Has a Philippine sort of look. One never knows what to expect in this house."

"Clayton affects oddities because he thinks it English form. He will keep on as long as he dares. When he goes too far people will show him they are bored, and he will have to—" he paused, glancing over his shoulder,

The voice that made him pause was perfect in modulation. "The poor child finds it dull. Stepping from the carriage she turned her ankle. I wanted to drive back at once, but she insisted it was nothing. Of course she is not dancing."

The young men receded from the doorway with grace. Mrs. Sevenbanks was non-irritant, non-astringent; her gowns moderate, her diamonds small and her blondeness never florid. Her delicate encouragement of Clifford, the well-preserved old bachelor Assembly authority, was like fine gauze against the firm neutrality of her nine-year-old half-mourning. She was never anything less than that cool, calm, considerate creation of circumstance known dimly to the *polloi* without the pale as the society leader. She had a smile for the receding young men, and then her gaze fell on Miss Sylvester and the ponderous individual of dark complexion.

She put up her glass for an instant and put it down again. There was no movement of her brows as she spoke in a low tone, "Alma!" But the girl heard and rose. With a little catch of breath she said, "I must go to my aunt. It has been pleasant to hear you speak of my native land." Then she moved forward slowly, as if walking hurt her.

The man did not follow; he stood looking after her with intent black eyes, like one unaccustomed to ball-rooms and unsure of what he should do.

Mrs. Sevenbanks paid no attention to him, but spoke to her niece:

"You are looking pale. I think I should take you home."

"Very well," said Miss Sylvester, "I am quite ready."

As she passed through the doorway she turned and glanced back at her late companion, who replied to this attention with a very low bow, his hand on his heart. The bending of his body in this particular manner had something grotesque in it. Mrs. Sevenbanks made no allusion to him until her old friend Clifford had placed them in a carriage and they were being driven home. Then, pleasantly enough, she inquired: "And who was that peculiar person, Alma, with whom you were talking?"

"It was a South American gentleman, Aunt Louise."

"A gentleman? I thought he hardly knew how to act. I fancied . . . these — detectives, you know. Still, it was not such a crush. . . . What a remarkable way of bowing! I should call him an amusing character. I wonder how he came to be at the dance."

"I suppose they asked him." The girl spoke half-pettishly. "He has not amused me at all. He has made me sad—and sick of this country."

"You surprise me—though I suppose I ought not to be surprised, for I have heard you say something of the kind before. If you longed for Paris or London . . . but to leave civilization and go down there among the savages—"

"You forget, Aunt Louise, that I was born down there among the savages."

"Oh, no, I do not forget that. But you were educated for the most part in the United States, and after all, you are an American."

"Anyway," said Miss Sylvester, "I hate New York! I can't breathe in it—there's something stifling!" She threw herself forward and held her face to the open window of the carriage. Stars were faintly visible in the sky where it was clear of clouds. It was a still night early in April; there was no breeze. In a moment as if impatient of their slow

progress homeward, she fell back against the cushions.

"Does your ankle pain you very much?" her aunt inquired, kindly. "I am sorry I did not insist on going home sooner. It should have been bathed at once with arnica."

"I had almost forgotten it," said the girl. "General"—she pronounced it with the Spanish g—"da Veiga was telling me stories of fearful wars."

"Hennyraff? is that a Christian name?" Mrs. Sevenbanks was not an intentional aggravator, but she had a way of ignoring anything South American—even a Spanish pronunciation.

"It is a military title," Alma explained, languidly, though with no tone of disrespect. "Something higher than colonel. He is an exile now."

"You refer to that very dark, very large man?" Mrs. Sevenbanks persisted. "He is not—of another race, then?"

"I did not ask him if he was of another race," said Miss Sylvester, closing her eyes.

The carriage had turned into an avenue and rolled more easily on asphalt. It was less of an effort to converse, and Mrs. Sevenbanks still had something to say. "You are not asleep, Alma?"

"No."

"To-morrow, when your Aunt Ester Harding arrives—it is to-morrow she comes, I think?"

"Yes, it is to-morrow. If she comes in the morning I shall probably be out. I have promised Alice Dow to go out with her. But then Aunt Ester may want a little chat with you."

The carriage had stopped. Mrs. Sevenbanks uttered a sound like a very faint sigh as they went up the steps and were admitted by the automatic servant. "There is rather a bright light," she said. "I think your Aunt Ester may have already arrived."

Back where the severity of the drawing-room melted into artistic

corners and a five-o'clock-tea nook the lights were certainly brilliant. The tea table was drawn up by the side of the widest and most comfortable chair, in which reposed a lady, her tremendously arched Spanish feet in their tremendously high-heeled boots resting on the handsomest and costliest cushion she had been able to find in the room. As Mrs. Sevenbanks and Alma came in, domino-like in their shimmering opera cloaks, she sprang up with a cry like a child's: "I am here, you see; they wanted to send me to bed, but I wouldn't go. I ordered coffee, being half-dead. I came direct from Chicago—the porter of the sleeping car stole my opals—to-morrow I shall enter complaint—and to-morrow I shall have my face steamed and a Turkish bath. Till then I represent Chicago."

"You are looking well," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, embracing her mildly and at once giving place to Alma. "I am glad we returned early. You were very right to order coffee, but I fear it may keep you awake. I know how it would affect me." She smiled, glanced at the black lees in the cup, shivered and glanced back at her guest. "You are looking extremely well," she repeated.

Her private impression that this other aunt of Alma was getting shorter and stouter and of a greasier olive complexion every year, and more and more inclined to gabble and cackle in true Latin-American manner, and more and more addicted to terrible black coffee and violent gestures and loud colors in dress, she was not obliged to express. It was quite her own affair if she chose to consider quarter-Spanish—example, Alma—bad enough, and half-Spanish—example, Alma's Aunt Ester—much too bad. She was glad the visitor had come, for she wanted to talk with her about their niece. Ester Harding also was a widow without encumbrances, and really ought not to shirk her responsibility in the matter.

Miss Sylvester had put off her cloak and was looking into the silver

pot in which the coffee had been brought. "I can't very well have any when there isn't any to have," she mused aloud. Then she sat down on a sofa with both the elder ladies regarding her. Aunt Sevenbanks smiled and was silent; Aunt Harding admired her gown of pale yellow chiffon over silk.

"You were at a ball?" said Aunt Harding. "How could you come away so soon? And with such a dress! Weren't the young men all wild to dance with you?"

"Oh, in New York, Aunt Ester? I thought you were up to date. Perhaps if I were married someone might take a fancy to me. However, it doesn't matter much. I don't fancy any of them. There is something so 'painful-duty'-like about them. Wild to dance with me! Why, if they had a lot of little pink angels down from Paradise——"

"Alma," requested Mrs. Sevenbanks, "be moderate."

"Anyway, I hate New York!" the girl went on, exactly as she had spoken in the carriage. "Aunt Ester, do you never long for the old days? Don't you remember the good times we had down there?—the dances at the legation, the balls at the President's palace, the long room with canvased floor and spangles sprinkled over it to make it gay, the old-fashioned chandeliers with thousands of candles, the band that played and played, and the suppers in the balconies, the champagne and all the lovely speeches and the waltz, waltz, waltz, and the *danza* all night long till the sun came up over the mountains! Oh, to go back seven years and have it all over again—at fifteen!"

Mrs. Sevenbanks looked straight before her and made no sound. The suggestion of a fifteen-year-old girl at a ball may have been too appalling. Mrs. Harding, on the other hand, regarded their niece with sympathetic expression. Three consecutive cups of good black coffee had made her eyes shine. She also could remember happy hours under equa-

torial skies—days of sun splendor, nights of star glory.

"It is really tame up here, Aunt Ester," the girl went on. "I don't wonder it broke poor papa's heart when he was recalled. Half the time—I mean six months of the twelve—everything is unreal, artificial—heat and light and everything else. To-night at the Claytons' there was a man just up from the Argentine—exiled from some country—and he was telling me how he got away. It brought back old recollections—especially that last night at the palace—the night before papa got that abominable cablegram from Washington. I could see the lights and hear the mazurka that the band played in the alcove"

"O—oh!" Her Aunt Ester leaned forward with intense black eyes. "You remember that ball? It was fine! You had a good time, I think."

"Of course I did. It was there I danced so much with the attaché from—from Bolivia, with red hair. He came up this way, smiling and romantic—" she rose to illustrate—"and bowed away down, down, down. I don't see how he ever kept his balance. He had been drinking the health of the President of the United States in about twenty cognacs. Then we started off so—la-ah, l'la, l'la, l'la."

The golden sweep of chiffon, the memory of the sensuous music, the familiar motion, seemed suddenly to go to the elder lady's head. She sprang up with a jubilant cry that drew itself out into the continuous toot-tut-toot of horn and clarinet, and in her horribly high-heeled boots she danced.

Mrs. Sevenbanks's gracious mask of sufferance had remained unaltered through all, but presently chancing to turn her eyes away to the door, that lady was visibly startled to observe the butler standing in the arch, his eyes riveted on a Corot on the opposite wall. He had, naturally, seen nothing else. His voice was suave. "Beg pardon, ma'am; shall I remove the coffee things, ma'am?"

And Mrs. Sevenbanks made answer, with carven countenance: "Yes, James, and as we shall retire at once you may wait and put out the lights."

II

MRS. HARDING had had her coffee and was down for late breakfast, English style, when her hostess appeared next morning. Her mood was as cheerful as the elaborate old-rose house gown she wore. She hastened to inform her sister-in-law that Alma had gone out with Alice Dow, "in that reprehensible American fashion, without an older person."

"I desired that she should go without me," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, "for I wished to speak with you about her."

"Why don't you let her get married?" asked Mrs. Harding. "She is twenty-one, isn't she?"

"In her twenty-third year," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, with patient stiffness. She always felt stiff of a morning until after taking her tea. It was a sort of eye-opener that she absolutely required, and except on rare occasions was taken in her own room. This morning was one of the rare occasions. She had slept rather late, and she remembered Mrs. Harding had odd ways of early rising.

"*Ave Maria!*" was Mrs. Harding's next remark. "That is much too old; but you may have found someone you think suitable."

Mrs. Sevenbanks smiled. "I am afraid your visit to Chicago has crowded many things from your memory; for instance, some of Alma's characteristics. You must remember she has Spanish blood in her veins; she is hard to control."

"Of course," said Mrs. Harding; "that is only natural, since her mother, who was my only sister, was the child of a Spanish gentleman and an English lady."

Mrs. Sevenbanks ignored this recital of ancestry. "You know," she urged, mildly, "you and I are alike responsible."

"But what do you expect me to do?" cried Mrs. Harding. "I have no settled home—I am on the wing. Do you wish me to take her with me to Paris—or Caracas? I am not sure to which place I shall go next. It would be easier to marry her off in Caracas."

Mrs. Sevenbanks shuddered. "I could hardly consent to that. Alma is an American, and should marry one of her own countrymen."

"One of these Yankees—these pale-eyed, white-blooded egotists? My husband was at least an Englishman."

Mrs. Sevenbanks reflected. The tea was beginning to take effect; she would soon feel able to smile. "Shall you mind if I speak very frankly?" she asked.

"Oh, you always do that."

"Well, then, my dear friend, my idea is that we have hardly coöperated as we should in this matter. Alma has certainly given me some bad moments of late. She is of age, and at any time can act according to her own judgment, or rather impulse. Were it not for her birth and breeding I should feel actual terror when she displays capricious and erratic ways, describing the life she led in that barbarous South American republic, and disparaging the United States. I often think it a misfortune that my brother ever went down there—apart from the terrible injustice of his being recalled. I do not refer to anything connected with his marriage, for of course your sister Dolores was a lovely woman. But it does seem as if there were a fatal fascination for some persons in the first taste of that wild and lawless life."

"Perhaps you wouldn't think it so lawless if you lived there a while," said Mrs. Harding. "There is plenty of law."

"Yes? But you understand what I mean. . . . What I was going to say . . . last night at the Claytons'—you certainly know who the Claytons are? I am speaking now in confidence—I should not like her to suppose I remarked it—last night Alma sat out at least two dances talk-

ing to a dark-skinned, large, odd-looking man, a General Somebody or other, she tells me, but most unpresentable and awkward."

"I thought she sat out the dances because her ankle was hurt."

"But there were others—the right kind of men—that she might have talked to. Besides, her ankle was not so bad or she would not have felt so cheerful when we returned home."

"Cheerful! Oh, you mean because we were dancing and singing?"

Mrs. Sevenbanks was silent. A very faint pink tinged her face. She remembered how the butler had stood in the doorway.

"And this large, dark somebody or other," suggested Mrs. Harding—"perhaps he is very rich."

Mrs. Sevenbanks sighed. "I doubt it. I believe she said he was an exile."

"Exiles sometimes carry away millions with them. You are afraid she has fallen in love with him?"

"In love?" repeated Mrs. Sevenbanks, with a shudder. "I doubt if the man be not some half-breed. Our new possessions are responsible for these alarming evidences."

"Part Indian, you mean? But if he is so unattractive, what do you fear?"

Mrs. Sevenbanks compressed her lips. "Ugly men fascinate like snakes. However, it is not a case for argument, but for action. I rely on you, my dear Ester, to assist me in discouraging these wild ideas of Alma's about going back to those savage countries. Believe me, the day of her wedding will see a great load lifted from my mind."

"The day of any girl's wedding usually has that kind of effect on her relatives, nowadays," Mrs. Harding reflected, aloud. "I will try to do what I can to meet your wishes—if you will give me an idea how to begin. When she returns shall I read her a lecture?"

"Certainly not; that would be unwise. Only—forgive my frankness—if you would not encourage her again as you did last night."

"I shall try to remember."

"Thank you. Another thing; you might, if she alludes to him, express your disapproval of the presumption of the person I have told you about—"

"Yes?"

"—and suggest that you look forward with solicitude to her marriage with some civilized Christian gentleman in proper position to become her husband. You know as well as I how Alma is situated in regard to money. My poor brother left hardly anything. I have this and my country house and a little other property—a comfortable life income. But in most of the estate I have only a life interest. I can do comparatively very little for her. You know just what you can do."

"Oh, dear, yes. I have been gambling terribly—in the g. h's."

Mrs. Sevenbanks started and flushed. "Pray do not let anyone hear you."

"No, of course not; but it is true. They are h's, you know—such fascinating h's! There is nothing like them in America; and that is fortunate, I suppose. Not even bridge whist—"

Mrs. Sevenbanks rose. "Let us go up stairs," she said; "I have some directions to give the seamstress."

With Alma returned her friend, Alice Dow, a young lady for whom Mrs. Sevenbanks always had a cordial welcome. The cordiality might have had root in the knowledge that Miss Dow's cousin had married a very decent earl, and that the Dows themselves were financially solid, if unpretentious. Alice was rather plain, large-featured, large-boned. She was quite tall, and would make a fine-looking woman if she ever acquired flesh enough. There was self-assertion about her that compelled admiration.

Alma's aunts were both far back in the drawing-room when the girls came in. Mrs. Sevenbanks was writing a letter; Mrs. Harding was at the piano trying to remember a Persian lullaby she had heard in Chicago.

She deserted the instrument to converse with the young ladies. The Claytons' dinner dance of the night before seemed to interest her.

"I am sorry I was not there," said Miss Dow. "Alma tells me there was a foreigner who told weird stories in broken, not to say shattered, English, and whom everybody seemed to take for a cannibal or a bandit."

"Was he handsome?" inquired Mrs. Harding, naively.

"About as beautiful as a totem pole," Alma replied. She noticed that her Aunt Sevenbanks had stopped writing to listen.

Alice Dow laughed. "He is an Indian, then?"

"He has some Indian blood, perhaps. I forgot which tribe—we spoke of several. It might be Botocudo, or Bugre."

"Are not all those tribes cannibals?" came Mrs. Sevenbanks's cool, sweet inquiry across the room.

"Oh, yes, indeed," put in Mrs. Harding. "The terrible anthropophagi—"

"He seemed very fat and sleek," said Alma, indifferently. She began to think that her aunts had been discussing her and da Veiga. A rebellious sort of disgust came over her. Why should she not listen to a man because he was of another nationality—perhaps race? What difference did it make to her if he were part Indian? What interest had she in him beyond the fact that he reminded her of days long past; of life in another zone, under a bluer sky and in happier companionship; of her dear father, of the old home, of the mother who had died while she was yet a child; of all the impressions of life in youth—perhaps of something else back in those long-gone days—something vague, fine, unacknowledged even in her own heart; something that partook of the delicacy and freshness of that saving grace of the North, the northern Spring?

Mrs. Harding spoke suddenly and irrelevantly. "In Paris, during my last visit, I met many South Americans. I don't know, Alma, whether

you remember Vasquez—Roberto Vasquez. He was a writer—a poet, you know—and also, I think, a lawyer and once an attaché. Very handsome, with perfect features, and tall and straight. You ought to remember him. He came to the legation. Your father liked him. They tried to engage him to that terribly homely girl that—I forget her name. He was in Paris, still as handsome as ever, and not married yet. You don't remember him? But then you were so young."

"Yes," said Alma, slowly, "I remember Señor Vasquez." She paused a moment. "Why do you look at me? Do I seem pale? This ankle is going to bother me, after all."

III

WHEN Alma and her friend had gone up stairs before luncheon Miss Dow shrugged her shoulders and laughed softly as she observed: "You hadn't fully realized the seriousness, had you?"

"Of what?"

"Of your little flirtation with the cannibal last night."

"I suppose I hadn't, though Aunt Louise did say something about it in the carriage, coming home. One would think I wanted to abduct him. Sometimes I fancy I might as well marry some ordinary brute of a man and escape."

"You wouldn't prefer an extraordinary brute?"

"Such a preference could be easily satisfied, I imagine, if I did."

"Don't get bitter, my dear. Look at me. I'm twenty-five—nearly twenty-five—and single. I will be a hundred and twenty-five and single before I'll take any desperate step. I'd rather be bored than tortured."

"Suppose you were both?"

"Nobody ever is."

"Oh, yes, I have been; that is, bored and tortured by turns. You know how Aunt Sevenbanks is—and then she sends for Aunt Ester; and then, well, poor Aunt Ester, she would

like to please me all the time, and how can she? This morning, while I was out, Aunt Sevenbanks simply filled her up to the ears with her painful duty—I'm sure it's a painful duty—toward me. She will begin to work on me presently. She has begun already, in fact—about the anthropophagi."

"Why not get her off by herself and have a confidential talk? That is what I should do."

"Aunt Louise allows no opportunity for that."

Alice Dow was arranging her hair before the mirror. "You should create an opportunity—may I help myself to a hairpin or two? Thanks!—yes, create an opportunity. You are altogether too childlike, soft and unresisting and pliable. People can do what they please with you."

"You are very much mistaken if you think so," said Alma, angrily; "I have a very strong will of my own."

"You think you have. Now, don't get vexed. I tell you it is true. You haven't bone enough in your composition, backbone or any other kind of bone. Look at your wrists. What you have are very pretty, but what use are they? You can't play the piano; you are not a success at the violin. You never won a game of tennis, much less golf. I heard a man refer to you as the boneless maid. Of course he admired your beauty."

"What man?"

"I think it was Frank Sands."

"Why, he is more idiotic than I thought he was."

"Oh, it wasn't so bad. You are delicious to look at. But you haven't resisting power. Look at my wrists. Do you think anyone will ever trouble my peace of mind?" She pushed back her narrow sleeve cuffs and regarded her angular forearms with sincere pride.

"You wouldn't fight, would you?" said Alma, half induced to laugh.

"I might," said Miss Dow, just as the maid tapped on the door to inform them that luncheon was ready.

As the two descended the stairs to-

gether Alma whispered, nervously: "If you notice you will see how Aunt Ester has been prepared for action."

"Primed and loaded, eh?"

But no tell-tale indication was discernible throughout the meal. Soon afterward Miss Dow took her leave with a reassuring glance. Presently Mrs. Sevenbanks telephoned for her carriage and announced her intention of going out. Would Mrs. Harding accompany her? Mrs. Harding thought she would better stay and visit with Alma.

They agreed to go up to Mrs. Harding's room, because Alma could then inspect some new gowns her aunt had brought from Paris. Two of them had been worn once in Chicago, the lady declared, and were of course ruined. One could only drive out in a closed carriage there, she said. And besides, there was the huge chimney of a power house but a block away from the North Side mansion at which she had stopped.

One of the other gowns was too small for her. She had never worn it; she thought she would give it to Alma. It was a dinner dress of scarlet chiffon and satin. Alma thanked her and hated to deprive her of it, but she insisted, and even made her put the bodice on to see what alterations were necessary and if they could be made by Mrs. Sevenbanks's seamstress.

"And now, my dear," she said, "you see I wanted to have a talk with you while your Aunt Louise is out. For it seems to me you are not perfectly happy with her."

"Did she tell you I was not happy?" the girl asked, perversely.

"Oh, I can see."

"She talked with you about me this morning?" said Alma.

"She certainly did speak to me," Mrs. Harding acknowledged. "And I asked her if she desired me to take you to Paris or Caracas."

"Oh, Aunt Ester! Would you—will you take me to Venezuela? Oh, how happy I should be to get away from New York! I don't care a bit

for it. I don't care for society. I don't seem to belong to it."

"But, my dear child, you must! You see it is necessary. How else would you ever get properly married if you didn't?"

"Why should I get properly married? I don't see the necessity."

"But consider what a woman is at forty—single and thin—you will probably be thin—with the lines coming around her neck and a constant need to wear things to cover them; afraid to laugh because the marks around the mouth get deep, with always the tremendous expense for facial massage, and no husband to pay the bill."

"The men that I meet at the Claytons' and elsewhere," said Alma, "are very tiresome—and very insincere. I used to think it was only sincere people that tired one, but I was mistaken. My worldly knowledge is increasing. These men, you know, that make sweet speeches to one's face and when her back is turned call her names—"

"Names?"

"The boneless maid, for instance. Isn't that a nice title?"

"Why, it seems to me there was a poem your grandmamma used to be very fond of with that title. The boneless maid—or child—or it might have been painless—or sinless, I am not sure. Perhaps the sinless something."

Alma was not appeased. "I may be altogether lacking in bone," she said; "Alice Dow said so. All I know is that life is a bore most of the time, at least when you can't have any ideas of your own."

"Ideas of your own are like babies," said Mrs. Harding; "they are all right if you keep them quiet."

"I should be perfectly happy, Aunt Ester, if you would take me to Caracas. Why can't you? Only to be on horseback once more, galloping along beautiful mountain roads at sunrise, breathing the delicious air off the hill slopes, hearing such melody out of the forests, smelling such perfume from the orange groves;

climbing steep turns of path and suddenly coming along precipices to hear the roar of waterfalls; fording streams, swollen yellow rivers or crystal mountain brooks; stopping in the shade to scoop up delicious drinks with a *jcara*. Do you remember the journeys we had, papa and you and I and Mr. Harding, off to the mines or down to the banana *fincas* on the coast? our rides through the great forests, where the monkeys in the tree tops roared with the cold at daybreak when we were camping out, and the fun we had cooking our coffee over three logs, and the night in the thatched hut without walls, where the moonlight blazed silver fire and the nightingale sang in the thicket along the river?"

"Yes, yes, I do remember," said Mrs. Harding, drying her eyes; "I do remember those happy days, gone forever. I wish we could live them over, Alma; but it is impossible. I should be glad to take you with me, but your Aunt Louise would never consent. She told me so. She says you must give up the idea. You must marry a New York gentleman, she says. That is very hard." Her eyes were full again. "That is very hard. But I should never dare oppose your Aunt Louise. You must give up the idea. Ah, life is too sad! It is fortunate we do not have to live forever." She dried her eyes once more and took up a gold embroidered waist from the floor. "The hooks on this bodice are simply vile," she said; "I cannot make them hook at all. And the belt is rotten."

"Aunt Ester," Alma persisted, "you say Aunt Louise says I must marry a New York man. Do you think she has anyone in particular in mind?"

"No," Mrs. Harding sighed, "I cannot say that."

"It wouldn't be a bit of use," the girl went on. "I am not going to marry. There was a time when I had foolish dreams of someone who would be brave and true and poetic. I have found out that it is all nonsense."

"Yes," said Mrs. Harding, submissively, "but then the best thing is to please your Aunt Louise as much as possible and avoid irritating her. It seems she was irritated last night because of that man—what did you say his name was?"

Alma was prevented from replying by the approach at the half-open door of a maid, who brought the butler's salver with a letter for Mrs. Harding. Alma, moving a little to let the girl pass her, saw beside the letter a card decorated with something that might be a coronet. A moment later Mrs. Harding read aloud: "Geraldina." She quickly broke the seal. "Say that I will be down soon," she instructed the servant, and handed the letter to Alma. "Only fancy! News from home—that is, from friends now over in Paris. How charming! I suppose I must dress." She caught up a yellow crêpe scarf and held it to her cheek. "My face not steamed yet, and—black as a buzzard. Such a pleasing letter from Severino Gonzalez. This Geraldina—a count—must be from Brazil. What is his other name? da—"

"Da Veiga," read Alma, slowly. "Why, Aunt Ester, it must be the cannibal. I didn't know he was a count."

IV

"REALLY!" Mrs. Sevenbanks could put more into the three syllables than any other woman in New York. Mrs. Harding had been telling her about Señor da Veiga's call, his excellent letter of introduction and his very proper behavior. Mrs. Sevenbanks had looked at the card and smiled. "He called *with* the letter? . . . Alma saw him?"

"I sent for her to come down. It seemed to me there was no harm; besides, for a girl there is no man more interesting than the prohibited man. I do not think you need have the slightest concern about this Count Geraldina."

"If he is a South American, and an exile, how does he come to be a count?" Mrs. Sevenbanks inquired.

"Why, sometimes titles are conferred in Europe on South Americans of vast wealth."

"You mean they buy them. And you think he possesses vast wealth?"

"No, I do not," said Mrs. Harding, with candor. "I think he has no more than enough to live on. It seems he has not been long in New York. He at first stopped at a hotel, he says, but now has his own bachelor apartments in Madison avenue. I believe he would amuse Alma very much, and I advise you to let me present him to you and to receive him kindly if he calls. Others will receive him, you know. Besides, he is really not bad looking. It is only a matter of tan."

"He seems thoroughly impossible," objected Mrs. Sevenbanks, "but it may be that your view of the matter is not an unwise one."

In this way she gave a grudging permission, and da Veiga was brought under her personal inspection a few days later. She was polite to him, but she did not forget to inquire again about the title. Da Veiga, seated before her, of erect, imposing figure, over which his Prince Albert coat seemed buttoned with difficulty, with mustache and imperial waxed into diabolical points, a smile, as gracious and fatuous as that of an Indian idol, distending his cheeks, enlightened her after his own peculiar fashion:

"Until now, madama, I 'ave not make up my mind. Gradill 'ave I thought 'ow in my own country my father did say, 'I will be no more the *Conde*.' And 'e did fling forth the flag and did cry, 'I am *republicano!*' and with three times the *viva* in 'is throat, bang! 'e did fall down dead! Then I, who was in 'is place *Conde*, I did say the same; I did cry '*Viva la república!*' But now, madama, you see, it may be in New York if I am not one *conde*, what I am?"

Mrs. Sevenbanks took her cue from this ingenuous confession. She would know something about his source of income.

"A title," she remarked, urbanely, "presupposes certain hereditary qualities that should merit esteem. One does well to think twice before dispensing with it. Of course, an extremely large fortune is required to maintain a title, even in New York."

"Ah, that is it. I did say to my friends that I did thank them for their vare kind offer. 'Motch oblige,' I did say—'motch oblige, my dear sirs. I will not to be *senador*.' You see, I rather make another million or two in New York. I place my concession and I sell my stock."

Mrs. Sevenbanks gazed at him in silence, her grayish-blue, impartial eyes studying him from the white scar at the centre of his forehead to the rich brown under his skin. And he returned her gaze with the same ingenuous, Indian-idol smile. Perhaps if Mrs. Sevenbanks had put up her glass—she was very slightly near-sighted, and the glass was remarkably strong—she might have discovered, lurking under the waxed points of his mustache, the flicker of muscle that no human countenance has ever succeeded in wholly suppressing—the flicker that gives the lie look.

From that time on Mrs. Sevenbanks seemed less apprehensive. During the days that Mrs. Harding remained at the house da Veiga called frequently. On one occasion, when he came early, Alma entertained him in company with Alice Dow. When he went away Miss Dow informed her friend that she had been reading up on aboriginal tribes of the Western Continent. "The Buggries," she said, "or whatever it is—"

"Boogray," corrected Alma.

"Well, whatever it is, you should see the pictures of them, with rings in their noses and under lips propped out with bits of stone. Oh, they are delightful! Now, if this particular Bug—"

"Oh, what has the poor wretch ever done to you?" cried Alma. A sudden inexplicable pity had come into her heart for the unfortunate, uncouth

individual who had sat so ill at ease in her aunt's drawing-room and still had seemed so loath to go away. Alice Dow glanced sharply at her.

"You alarm me," she said. "Please don't alarm me again. Embrace follows right after pity in the poem, you remember."

"One might find it difficult to embrace such dimensions," Alma responded, listlessly. She was never offended at Alice Dow. As for da Veiga, she still pitied him.

The next time he came there were others present, and she was pouring tea. Some of the guests had met him before, and appeared pleased and amused at the second meeting; others, regarding him for the first time, looked as if they were not quite sure whether or not to follow Mrs. Sevenbanks's lead. That lady was thoroughly courteous, if not cordial, to the foreigner. There was humility, Alma thought, in the way he took his leave, saying, "I did not expect to find so many ladies and gentlemen. I did come to say good-bye to Mrs. Harding. She is one vare fine lady. I will come to-morrow to say good-bye to 'er."

He kept his word next day, but arrived too late, for Mrs. Harding, who was going to Washington, had just driven away with Mrs. Sevenbanks to the station. Alma, who had caught cold and dared not go out, was at home, alone.

"I was preparing to be awfully dull, Count Geraldina," she said, lightly, "but you will brighten me up. We will speak Spanish, and you must tell me some of your thrilling stories about the Paraguay War and the frontier battles. You will have some coffee, will you not? My Aunt Ester took coffee just before going. She prefers it. Tea is for sick people, she says."

Da Veiga drank the contents of the cup with a solemn face, and almost at one swallow.

"She is one vare nice lady," he declared. "When you write to 'er you must please give most respectful and cordially regards." He balanced

the egg-shell cup on his knee. "She is one flower," he pursued, "from those fair land. Oh, those fair land! Last night in my dream I did go back and see my 'ome. *Ai de mi!* I did wake and I did weep. Again I did see the mountains and the rivers wide and deep. Then in my dream I did look far down and I did see the smoke and 'ear the terrible *cañone*. And I did found the *diablos*, the enemy, all around, and all their guns point on my. They take my to the prison, they tie my, they leave my. I know what they say. Next morning—bang! shot dead. Oh, my God! They set bread and water by my—they leave my there. Night come. I pray, 'Oh, *mio Dios!* saved my!' I work my 'ands for 'ours. Pretty soon—bim! I break the rope. I untie my feet. I listen. No sound. Then I 'ear something like someone *ronca*—the man they did put to guard my, 'e did sleep. 'E—what you call it?—'e began *roncar*. I creep out. I take the knife from 'im. I creep on. The next man move; I take 'im so—by that throat. 'E draw the knife and so—cut my. I did stab 'im back. 'E did fall. I did found my 'orse, I climb on 'im. I ride—fast—fast—oh, my poor 'orse! I did clasp the neck, I did kiss—I did spur 'im on. On—on oh, *mio Dios!* I know the road; a league, another league, until I get over cross the *limites*. I kiss, I baig my 'orse, I put my face to the neck—'e did go on—on—on—then 'e did fall—boum—dead!"

In his excitement he had thrown himself heavily from his chair on his knees, forgetting the egg-shell cup and saucer. And these now lay in quite small pieces. He looked at them in alarm.

"I am vare sorry," he began.

"Oh, it doesn't matter at all," said Alma.

He rose slowly. "But I will buy one more for you," he continued, as he got upon his feet.

"Don't think of it," she insisted, with an amiable smile. "I was so interested! How terrible it is to be at the mercy of enemies! And in

Paraguay!—the Paraguayans are rather cruel, I think."

"They are *diablos!*" said da Veiga; "they will eat their fathers."

The flicker that Mrs. Sevenbanks had not observed was around his mouth. If Mrs. Sevenbanks had not observed it, how should a person of half her age?

He said good-bye and went away, and Alma made haste to secure all the fragments of the broken cup and saucer. She wondered if she should have much trouble to replace the cup, and thought, amusedly, that if her aunt had been there it would have been interesting to watch her face. Not that the slightest vexation would have shown itself, but on the other hand, Mrs. Sevenbanks would have perhaps foregone her exquisite good-form impulse to break another, in order to prove to her guest what very destructible, trivial matters such teacups are. "Ah, well, the poor man was hardly to blame," she decided. "I made him dramatic. He looked absurd on the floor. If his waistcoat buttons had burst off, as I thought they were going to"

V

THE second morning following Miss Sylvester received a letter:

MY DEAR, KIND MISS ALMA:

I fill vare surry to say that as yet is not chure that I can found the cop I did break last night. I do not know if I have time laft to go to the store to-day, because at 3 P.M. I shall meet some gentleman who did ask to buy some stock from my. Gradill I have thought of you, *no sabiendo porqu!* You are one of those yong lady that has mad a graty impression in my mind! I most say that you have mad me to think that true beuty only exesist at the Latins blood. Remember that I will alwes be your friend.

By-in-by.

Yours respectfull and cordial,

RUFINO DA VEIGA.

She had been feverish all night, and had been awake much of the time wondering if she should be well enough to go out in the morning and

duplicate the broken article, and where the set had been purchased. As yet she believed the cup had not been missed. She had just taken some very strong coffee, hoping to brace her tremulous nerves and hold them together, but they seemed ready to fly apart. Now, under her aunt's steadfast gaze, as she opened and read the letter, she felt herself going all to pieces. Something in her back seemed to give way with a snap; her limbs began to tremble, her throat muscles were knotted. Suddenly she began to laugh, with laughter that was strange and painful, and then tears were running down her cheeks, tears, tears, tears that would never cease. She fell back on the chair helpless and conscious of her helplessness.

"James," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, "my salts—in the drawing-room, on the onyx pedestal, I think." In the meantime she was putting ice water on the girl's temples and taking charge of da Veiga's unfortunate communication.

Later on, when Alma had recovered enough to go up to her room and lie down, and Mrs. Sevenbanks had given her a spoonful of her own particular remedy, the girl inquired what had become of the letter.

"I brought it up stairs, of course," said Mrs. Sevenbanks. "I glanced at it—it seemed proper I should know what news you had received to affect you so terribly. I need hardly say that I, too, am shocked. The impertinence of the man is beyond conception; I should like, by the way, to know what he has reference to; he speaks of something that was broken. He surely hasn't broken anything here?"

"Oh, yes, he has, Aunt Louise," said Alma, with desperate resolution. She drew a long breath. "It was—one of your cups."

"One of my cups!" Mrs. Sevenbanks turned pale. "You can't mean my five-o'clock-tea set!"

Alma nodded weakly. "Of course he will replace—"

"Replace! the clumsy monster!" Mrs. Sevenbanks trembled with an-

ger. "Replace! They are no ordinary—they were specially imported! Alma, this is really too much! To destroy my property and to presume to address a letter to you! I shall give the butler orders. It is all your Aunt Ester's fault—all her fault! I shall write her very plainly."

She turned and went trembling from the room. Alma lay still and thought. After a while she got up and saw that da Veiga's letter, properly folded in its envelope, was on the dressing-case. Her aunt's perfect breeding was always to be relied on. She lay down again, reproaching herself for the thought that had suggested itself that Mrs. Sevenbanks might make use of his letter to insult him.

The medicine she had taken soothed her, and she remained in bed nearly all day. Just before dinner she discovered that da Veiga had called and left cards, and had been told that the ladies were not at home. She felt sorry for him, and wished she had not impressed him as "kind." Probably he would keep on calling and being told they were not at home. He would perhaps think it was her fault, that she meant to be unkind to him—because of the cup! Or perhaps he would write to her again, and her aunt would be even more vexed. She wished vaguely that she might come upon him somewhere outside the house and in some way be able to give him a hint that her aunt was very rigid in her notions; or perhaps lead him to think that they were going away, so that he would not venture to call again. At all events, she could correct his possible idea that North American young ladies are more emancipated in the matter of receiving letters from gentlemen than Spanish-American young ladies.

The next day she felt very much better, and as it was a delightful Spring morning she started out soon after luncheon to call on Alice Dow. She had gone a few blocks from her home, had, in fact, arrived at an entrance to the Park, when all at once she saw coming slowly toward her—

da Veiga. He did not seem to see her, and she stood irresolute for a moment, wondering if he could be on his way to call at her home. But presently he glanced in her direction, quickened his steps and came on to meet her. He had a parcel in each hand and could only make one of his low, absurd bows.

"I did wish to take some flowers," he began, holding out to her the parcel in his left hand.

"Flowers? Oh, thank you. You are very kind." They were American beauty roses, and she took the paper from them and inhaled their fragrance with great delight. There were few people on the Avenue, and it seemed to her that the opportunity she desired had come quickly, and she must make the most of it. "I am so sorry," she said, "that I could not have the pleasure of receiving you. But you know we are very busy now; there is so much to be done before we go away to the country. We are going very early this year—quite immediately, you know." Her ears were beginning to burn, as they always did when she was telling anything not strictly true. At such times it was her neck that blushed rather than her cheeks.

"You are going away from New York?" repeated da Veiga, with solemn eyes. "But you did get one letter I did write to you?"

"Yes," said Alma, hastily. "Yes, and so, you see, I shall be saying good-bye to you for a long while, as I shall not see you again. And you mustn't mind about that cup—"

"I did found one cop, and I did bring," said da Veiga, extending the other parcel.

She hesitated. If her aunt were partly pacified! . . . The desire to see what he had brought seized her. Hardly anyone was passing near them. It was but a few steps into the great Park—under a tree whose leaves seemed to have unfolded in the night stood a bench—only nursemaids and their charges. . . . "Let us go over and sit down for a moment," she said. "I have been

ill, and am not strong." In any case she must prevent his calling again. "It was kind of you to trouble about it," she then said, opening the paper and the little box as she spoke. "It was most kind of you," she repeated, slowly and falteringly, as her eyes fell on the heavy German china he had selected. "My aunt," she went on, "has—has already ordered it replaced, but it was not the less kind of you. And this is very pretty, though slightly larger."

"It is yours," said da Veiga, solemnly.

"Oh, thank you." She gazed alternately at the flowers and the cup. Could she go on carrying these to Alice Dow's? She dared not return home, for da Veiga would beg to accompany her. If she carried the cup to the Dows' Alice's mother would have to hear the story. She would not mind if it were only Alice—but Alice's mother! If she could get away from da Veiga doubtless she could find a messenger office and send the cup home, addressed to herself. But in that case her aunt would see it and wonder. She could invent no possible excuse. It bore not the slightest resemblance to the precious set.

Da Veiga broke the silence, that had become strange and noticeable. "You will go away—out of New York?"

"Yes," she smiled. "You know everyone goes away from New York in the Summer. It is always so hot."

"And to where will you go?"

"To the country," said Alma, nervously. "Quite a way from here. Off in the mountains, you know."

"I am glad that you will be in the mountains," said da Veiga, "for I like the mountains. By-in-bye I will come to see you. You will give my the directions?"

Alma made no reply. She sat very still, gazing across—far across—at a lady passing down the Avenue. As she gazed her face was growing whiter every minute.

"What is that?" demanded da

Veiga, with sudden sharpness. "What is the matter?"

"Oh," she said, relaxing in an instant. "I thought—I thought it was my aunt, and I was frightened."

"You are 'fred of your aunt?" he asked. "She is not one kind lady?"

"Oh, yes," said Alma, slowly. "She is very kind."

"But you are 'fred of 'er?"

"She would be very vexed to find me sitting here—with a gentleman."

"But you are with my. If one man look at you I shoot—bang—'e is dead!"

"But that would be very terrible," she remonstrated. It seemed to her she was only talking to a big child whom it was hard to get rid of.

"Nothing shall be terrible that I will do for you," said da Veiga, emphatically.

The girl flushed. "I must go now," she said. "I will bid you good-bye, and I will take with me this pretty souvenir and the flowers."

"I will go by you, and I will carried them," he suggested.

"Oh, no, no; that would not be proper—and my aunt would be so angry. Good-bye, Señor da Veiga." She held out her hand.

He bowed low and touched his lips to her glove. "Good-bye," he said, mournfully, "my only friend. Good-bye, farewell."

Alma walked hurriedly away out of the Park and left him there. She had tried to show him what he must not do, and she had succeeded only in drawing him and herself into a ridiculous position. Suppose anyone had seen him kissing her hand! She hardly knew where she was going. And that wretched German cup and saucer—what to do with them? Couldn't she lose the box somewhere? She would go into some store and buy something, and pretend to forget the parcel; but the clerk would run out after her. She would drop it as she crossed the street; but she would be seen by some policeman and kept in view for suspicious conduct. She would leave it in a street car; but the conductor would shout after her.

She went on, hot and tormented, toward the Dows'. As she turned the corner she came on a ragged urchin. "Here, boy," she cried, thrusting it at him, "take this—it is a pretty cup—take it home to your—to your mother—quick!" and fled. As she ran up the steps and touched the bell button she heard a shrill voice inquiring where she had "swiped" it. But she only smiled—she was rid of the thing. Nor did she mind Alice's suggestion that she appeared feverish. She presented the roses to Alice's mother with a delightful feeling of diplomacy. Da Veiga was not mentioned.

VI

IN reply to her mother's plain question Alice Dow admitted she had known something about the affair. "I am no tale-bearer or mischief-maker, mamma," she said, bluntly. "I knew Alma was not happy with her aunt, and I was not surprised at any odd action of hers. As to his paying attentions to her, I have seen them walking together. But I didn't imagine it had gone as far as an engagement. I don't suppose it is anything worse than that," she concluded.

Mrs. Sevenbanks had sent a note begging them to come to her at once, as she was in great distress over Alma, who had refused to decline the addresses of an adventurer. She particularly wished to see Alice.

"Of course, if you insist, mamma," said the girl, "but I reserve my right not to interfere. If Alma should contemplate marrying Count Geraldina, who can prevent? She is of age, and must accept responsibilities. I don't know what we are going over to see Mrs. Sevenbanks for, anyway."

"She has sent for us," said the mother, finally, and with some sharpness. And of course they went.

Mrs. Sevenbanks was sitting rigidly upright in the drawing-room. She seemed too piteously helpless to

rise. Mrs. Dow went up and took her hand. "There is nothing serious the matter, I trust?"

"I am waiting to hear," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, with an effort. "I have sent a messenger—Alma has gone away."

"Gone away?" Mother and daughter repeated the words together.

"Yes. I am obliged to confess that we had a most painful interview. It began with my acquainting her with a proposal of marriage I had received for her; from an excellent *parti*—Colonel Clifford's cousin, Mr. Addison Clifford, a wealthy widower, as you know. She made some impertinent remarks about his first three wives, and then informed me that for weeks she had been permitting this adventurer's attentions—secretly, of course. I naturally expressed my horror, my aversion to the man, my disbelief in his title of count." Mrs. Sevenbanks paused and breathed exhaustedly. "She then assured me that the person had proposed marriage, and she had decided to accept him. I could hardly believe my senses. I begged her to consider what she was saying—to remember that she might yet care for some good man, and would then feel shame at having spoken in this way. She answered that she had had a romantic affection in her youth for someone favorably known to her father, that they had been separated forever, and that all the feeling she was now capable of—sympathy—was given to this—person. I was naturally very angry. I bade her believe that if ever she took such a false step she must expect no countenance from me, no legacy. She retorted that as he was, or would be, a millionaire, it mattered little. I cannot help thinking that she is not in her right mind. It seemed to me that I must see Alice and ask her if Alma had told her anything."

"Oh, Mrs. Sevenbanks," exclaimed Alice, "I am so sorry! But really I can't believe she will do anything so foolish. She will return presently, I am sure. We have only to wait."

"I have already waited nearly three hours," said Mrs. Sevenbanks.

"I could never have believed it of Alma," said Mrs. Dow. "Like Alice, I cannot think she will commit any folly. But did she not say where she was going?"

"She said—" Mrs. Sevenbanks spoke faintly—"that she was going to meet da Veiga and that—they were going to All Asphodels' Church to be married."

"You forbade her?" cried Mrs. Dow. The Dows were so very old-fashioned.

"Forbade? She is twenty-three. . . . I did not credit it. She soon left the house. An hour ago I sent— to All Asphodels'. And I am still waiting—the reply."

The Dow ladies looked at each other in consternation.

"There is nothing to do but wait," Alice repeated, "and you must have courage, dear Mrs. Sevenbanks."

"If the worst comes," said Alice's mother, "perhaps there is really nothing against the man. He seems to be received by some very nice people. Though he is not exactly the kind one would think of selecting for a charming young girl, he might still prove a devoted husband. He has been at the Claytons', and—"

"Mamma!" cried Alice, reproachfully.

"My dear, I am only looking at the darkest side; it is well to be prepared. And if he has such a great deal of money—for, after all, money is the chief thing nowadays—"

"But *has* he money? *Has* he money?" Mrs. Sevenbanks urged the question with a strange despair. "*Has* he money?" Her voice was almost a wail. Silence ensued for some moments. "I have tried," said Mrs. Sevenbanks then, "to make Alma's life a happy one. I should not have indulged her more had she been my own daughter—no, rather less. Whatever she has longed for I have sought to give her. I cannot remember to have denied her a single thing. It was my desire to see her happy. There seemed born in

her, however, that strange taste for those wild countries. You know my brother was Consul down there when he met and married her mother. Years later he was appointed Minister—only to be unjustly recalled, for the mere expression of an opinion. I could not take her to South America, but I would have taken her to London, to the Continent, to Egypt, around the world, to any place where there is no yellow fever. It seemed as if her one wish ungratified was to go where there is yellow fever. It seemed to me one might be happy without contracting that disease. The little property that her father left—it was extremely little, after unfortunate investments—I sought to preserve for her. It yields but a pitiful six hundred a year. The cruellest part is her having met this man and walked with him on the Avenue. Fortunately it is a time of year when no one is in town. We should have gone away but for my delaying because of the Clifford proposal."

The Dow ladies regarded her in pitying silence. It all seemed unreal, impossible. The Sevenbanks pride and reserve to crumble in this fashion! Was it really Mrs. Sevenbanks? They were conscious of great moral discomfort. It was plainly their duty as intimate friends to remain until the messenger returned, but they would have been glad to escape. Their curiosity was considerable, but it was overshadowed by dread. They felt that if, on the other hand, their fears were unfounded, Mrs. Sevenbanks would regret having said so much. The whole thing was most unfortunate. Besides, it was no less embarrassing to sit waiting in silence than impossible in such moments of suspense to introduce any other subject.

Intolerable intervals must have an end. The fine warning of an electric bell preceded only by some seconds the entrance of the butler with a letter.

"Dear Mrs. Sevenbanks, do have courage," said Alice, as she had said before. "Shall I open it?"

Mrs. Sevenbanks, trying to rise, murmured a faint assent.

"It is from Alma," said the girl, tremulously. "It only says, 'We were married, as I told you, at All Asphodels' and go at once—'"

She stopped, for Mrs. Sevenbanks had sunk down in a quivering, helpless heap.

VII

DA VEIGA and his bride had not gone away on any of the elaborate wedding tours he had previously suggested. There were certain capitalists he must meet who were to form a company of which he should be treasurer. Alma remained for the present in the Madison avenue apartment to which he had taken her. As she had never lived in an apartment, the novelty was pleasing. The rooms were smaller than any to which she had ever been accustomed, but they were delightfully, even luxuriously, furnished, even to an excellent little white-and-gold piano. There was only one servant—besides, of course, the weekly laundress—but this was a very capable Swedish woman. They were on the top floor, and there was a fine view and frequently a refreshing breeze. When da Veiga went away a few days after their marriage and left her at the window, looking out, she said to herself that at least he was a kind man, and as they were to have a good deal of money she would never need to regret the step she had taken.

By this time her Aunt Sevenbanks had got over the shock. By this time word had doubtless been sent her Aunt Ester, who was now in Paris, acquainting her with the result of Severino Gonzalez's unfortunate letter of introduction. By this time the Dows knew of her marriage, and Alice had shrugged her shoulders and said her say about aboriginal tribes. By this time it had been whispered about among such of her aunt's friends as had not left the city, and it would soon ring in the ears and roll under the tongues of those at the seaside

and in the country what awful thing that pretty little niece of Mrs. Sevenbanks had gone and done. There had not been much in the newspapers about it, fortunately, and the meagre announcement she had seen had made no mention of da Veiga's title, so that there would be no ridicule on that point.

It was rather nice to have someone morally or physically on his knees to her half the time. The warm weather was enervating, and they led a lazy life. Da Veiga always slept very late in the morning. At ten he would have his cup of black coffee, his cigarette case of black cigarettes and his morning newspaper of black headlines brought to him in bed. At twelve or later, after slow consumption of the contents of each of these, he would get up and make a correspondingly slow toilet.

They had been married a month or more when the first faint shadow of disillusion came creeping into that apartment. Alma had risen early one morning at the touch of a sunbeam that had lifted her eyelids, and had herself brought the coffee and the newspaper—the cigarette case was already under his pillow—to her husband. She had thought he was awake, and he was not. There was a sudden commotion of the bedclothes, a heavy lurching over, a savage human growl: "You don't will let my sleep! 'Ere 'ave I not sleep all night. You make my—"

In the shock of surprise and fright she let the cup slip, some drops of very hot coffee splashed on his face, and the Count Geraldina sat up in bed and swore in his own language an amazing oath.

Three hours later he was on his knees saying good-bye and calling her his angel, his life, his Alma indeed, his veritable soul, before setting out for Delmonico's, where he was to meet some gentlemen. For the first time it seemed to her there was too much wax on his mustache and chin tuft.

That evening he returned very late. He had had a three-hour luncheon,

he said, and was not hungry. He was sorry not to have come home sooner, and he would have a plate of consommé. The wine he had drunk at luncheon caused him to speak louder than usual, and he ate his soup audibly. After dinner—it was a long Midsummer day and still light at eight—they sat talking in the bow window of their small drawing-room.

"I did show to them 'ow they shall organize their companeyah," said da Veiga, getting his cigarette case from the top of a curio cabinet, "and I did talk to them like one *diablo*. 'Gentlemens,' I did say, 'you will not found any other way. You give my commixion or you give my cash. You give my what I shall need. One million—what is that?'"

He moved about looking for matches, and Alma quickly rose to supply the want. "But I thought the company was already organized," she said.

He continued to move about the room and made no reply to this. "You see," he went on with his own train of thought, "I 'ave long know those peoples. But I will found one way to get that money." He sat down again and smoked harder, gazing across the town. Presently he took the cigarette holder from his lips. "I 'ave too much pain to smoke," he said. "Was 'ere one man did shoot my in those wars; 'ere in this cheek."

"Wasn't the bullet extracted?" she inquired.

"Oh, that bullet. It near did kill my. You see back of this ear one mark. By this it did go out."

Alma reflected. "I suppose you are joking," she said. "There is a look in your eyes and around your mouth as if what you say is not true." The flicker had made itself dimly perceptible to her, though even yet she did not fully comprehend its meaning.

"What you say?" cried da Veiga. He tried to seem hurt at the suggestion, but was soon laughing and telling of jewels he had seen that day which he should purchase for her later on.

It seemed to her that night that sleep would never come. The room was very warm; July in town was something she had never before known. What air came in at the windows had no purity left; it seemed to rise soiled with the foul breath of thousands on thousands. The moon, some three hours high, was full and orange red, with the promise of still greater heat. She had not seen it so intense of color since the year before, when, she remembered, it had risen over the dunes that lay between the sea and the cottage where her aunt and she had dwelt. From this memory she gave thought to her aunt, serious, long thought for the first time in those fifteen days of changed existence. She recalled every circumstance of leaving home; how when she had sent for her trunks they had been delivered to the expressman without word or line; how no communication and no reproach had come to her. From remembering she could not but turn to speculating on what her aunt had said or done, if anything, in the matter; if the Dows had censured her very much, and if they would cut her were she to meet them on the street when they came back to the city in the Autumn. She wondered if her aunt had really felt very bad or was merely a little sad and much relieved to be rid of her responsibilities. She wondered what had become of Clifford, the widower. She wondered when she should meet her aunt again and what words would be exchanged between them. She felt a strange uneasiness at the thought of that meeting. She felt as if her aunt might ask her some unanswerable question; she felt restless and suffocated; her limbs were hot, and ached. She would have liked to spread a sheet on the floor of the drawing-room and stretch herself on it, but she feared to disturb da Veiga. He was long since asleep—dreaming perhaps of the men with whom he had had the luncheon. She felt that the night was going to be very long and she herself very lonely.

She felt as if something had changed; as if some veil was torn away and she saw more clearly. There was a heavy feeling on her heart. It seemed to her that she had done harm to some human being, and could never repair it. Tears oozed slowly from under her eyelids and wet her face and presently the pillow. Her throat contracted so that she could hardly breathe. She had not meant to be unkind . . . to anyone; she had not been able to be unkind . . . to da Veiga. And thus . . . she still had been unkind . . . to others . . . perhaps to herself!

VIII

"Oh, poor my darling!" Da Veiga had come home late again. "To-day was one vare warm day. I was near to die. You see they did meet. They did send for my and I did go—" The perspiration stood large on his brow as he spoke. "They think to rob one poor foreigner, and they make mistake. Those Americanos are one—I beg your pardone, I was near to swear. Oh, *querida*, when I did feel sure I did like to say, 'I take you so—by that neck, I break it—so, with my two 'ands.'"

Alma, watching him in a fascinated way, moved back unconsciously, a trifle pale.

"What is that?" he cried, irritably. "You are 'fred?'" Then suddenly changing to a smile, "*Querida*, I will go take off my coat, also my colyar. You did eat? No? We eat together. But frest I will drink one glass of water."

She carried it to him in the dressing-room, and he paused to swallow the contents in a single long, large draught and ask for more.

"But it is ice water," she said, "and you are very warm—"

"Oh, well, well, well!" he cried, crossly, flinging off his clothing. "Vare well, I wait." When he had attired himself more comfortably they went into the dining-room together, where the Swedish servant was placing the soup on the table.

"Why is not that window ope?" he demanded, still very cross.

"There is a strong breeze," said Alma, "and I thought the soup—and you—"

He would not wait for the explanation but threw up the sash with a noisy bang and took his seat. "I am so fresty," he murmured, seizing a second glass of water and swallowing it between two breaths. "What *sopa* is that?" He tasted it suspiciously.

"It is cream of celery, I think," Alma responded, feebly.

"Cream of *infierno!*" He flung down his spoon. "Where is that *ajo*? That woman is one *estupida*! I am sick of eat that *sopa* made by 'er. She is one big, oogly Swedie. I will send 'er from that kitchen; I will found one man." He had overlooked the garlic on a small dish near his plate. Now observing it, he began to tear it viciously into small pieces and drop it into the soup. "I will found one man," he repeated.

"Oh, Rufino, what could I do with just a man?" said Alma, beginning to show petulance. "I am here all alone, and I must have a maid. It seems odd enough, anyway—only one servant."

Da Veiga laughed. His favorite dish had restored his humor. "Oh, what a fine weather!" he cried, as the wind blew in strong over the lower housetops; "what a fine weather!" His countenance glistered with moisture; he suggested a large sponge. He would have no dessert, only his coffee and *cigarros*. The wind blew in delightfully. Later, when they returned to the drawing-room, he began to hum a song that Alma had always liked— "*O, Linda Flor.*" It came up with such ease from his deep chest that she had often wondered if he might not have been a really great singer. His ordinary speaking voice was melodious and well modulated. It was, in truth, one of his chief attractions, although she had never especially considered the fact.

After a little da Veiga ceased hum-

ming and spoke in a tone of retrospection.

"One girl did used to sing that song. I did know 'er." The pupils of his eyes darkened slowly with emotion. "She was one *diablo*," he said, under his breath. "I was near to kill 'er one day."

Alma stopped playing instantly and turned toward him. "To kill whom?" she asked.

"One girl did sing that song."

"But why did you wish to kill her?" she insisted; "did she sing so badly?"

"She did try to make my love 'er, and I did 'ate 'er soon." He sat comfortably in his easy chair, his feet on the little sofa that stood in the bow-window curve. From this window the view covered three directions. One saw many steeples and spires and tremendous hotel buildings and far away the haze that rose from the river.

"Now is vare motch more cool," said da Veiga, after an extended silence. He turned and saw that Alma had disappeared. "Where you are, *querida*?" he demanded.

"I am lying down in the bedroom," she answered, through the silken portières. "I am tired."

Then came another silence.

Some time later, it might have been hours, she was awakened by deep groans. Da Veiga had not retired, but had fallen asleep on the bow-window sofa. There had come a rapid change of atmosphere; the night had turned cold, as if a storm had burst somewhere.

"*Querida!* I am vare sick—near to die!"

"What . . . is the matter?"

It had taken some moments for her to come back from spirit wanderings. Her dream had been of the dunes down by the sea, where, with her aunt, she had spent the Summer the year before. There had been a tempest, and it was calm again, and there was sunlight shining over the sea. Now she emerged from the dimness of the bedroom in her white, clinging draperies, and shivering with cold and alarm, repeated the question.

"I did take cold," he murmured, with a long shudder. "I breathe so—vare 'ard I breathe. 'Ere in my breast I am sick. Maybe I come to die this night. *Ai, ai!* Maybe I come to die!"

"Will you not retire?" she asked, with her hand on his forehead. He responded only with a deeper groan. She turned the lights higher and sat down beside him. "If you will not go to bed," she said, presently, "I will cover you with blankets here and watch at your side awhile." She drew down the windows. He seemed to her not ill, but merely chilled and stiff from lying in the draughts. She realized that her alarm had been very fleeting, and it gave her a sense of uneasiness. Her thoughts were slightly confused, yet there was no actual fear.

But sleep did not come to him, even when she had tucked coverlets carefully about his couch and made herself comfortable in a Turkish chair. He continued to speak dreamily at intervals.

"I am one poor foreigner," he murmured, "yet so my wife is vare good to my. I never did thought to found one so good wife. I did 'ave such estrange life. In those day when my father did fling away that graty name and cry 'I am *republicano*!—in those day, when I did ride free upon that grandy lands, I never did thought.

. . . My mother was daughter of one great chief. 'E was one vare large *Indio*. 'E did go down from that mountains into those beautiful Bolivia. There 'e did see one young girl most beautiful. 'E did love 'er when 'e did see 'er and 'e did steal 'er and carry off—off—up back to that mountain. She did 'ave one daughter when she die. My grandfather did love that daughter and did make 'er to be like one *princesa*. By-in-bye come one tall young nobly man, son of one rich *conde*, and fall in love with 'er. 'E marry 'er and take away. And I did born of this. I did born there on those *frontera* of that beautiful Bolivia—I did lead one wildy life. I did take motch money

and did go away to Europa and did gamb'—" His voice died off in a sigh.

"Try to sleep," said Alma, in a tone of pure compassion. She began to feel now that the only real emotion left in the world was that of compassion.

But it seemed that he must go on recalling his life. "I did gamb' and did do motch wickedness. I did forget 'ow that my mother, who was one angel, did say to my, 'Rufino, never leave to pray and read in your 'oly book your prayers.' And when so I did forget, motch bad did come to my. I did know one woman—one *diablo Americano* that I did found in Paris. And she did try to make my love 'er. Many things she did do when I was sick; vare well she did take care of my when I did 'ave one *fiebre*. And she did travel with my to this country. But she did think to make my married her. Then she did 'ate my. I fill vare surry, but she was one *diablo*. Now she is dead."

Again his voice died away in a sigh. But this time Alma did not respond. She was not asleep. She had heard all that he had said, and she felt herself growing numb and unable to speak. It seemed to her that for the first time in her life she had tasted actual anguish. There was a single question that seemed piercing her with its desire to be uttered: "How long ago was this . . . other woman?" But she could not utter it. Her power of utterance was gone. Cold, dumb, inert, she sat there, scarcely caring to breathe. She knew now that she had made some terrible mistake, from which there could be no receding—to which there could come no end but death. She heard the clock in the room adjoining strike three, and she was wide awake.

IX

DA VEIGA was quite recovered by the following noon, and went down town in a cheerful mood. Immediately he had gone the Swedish girl

came to give warning. She was obliged to leave in order to go and take care of a sick relative. The postman, she explained, had brought her a letter on the first delivery, before her mistress was up. Alma, in reply, requested only that she prepare luncheon before going. It did not surprise her as much as it might have surprised her the day before to hear that the maid had not received her wages for three months. She was fast becoming accustomed to queer things.

While having luncheon she resolved not to pay the girl, but to ask her to come back that evening when Mr. da Veiga should be at home. At the last moment she changed her mind and decided that the girl might need money and she would give her at least a part of what was due. By three o'clock she was alone in the apartment. There was a cool and pleasant breeze from the west, and she thought it would be nice to go out for a walk. And then she remembered that da Veiga had said he should return early. She decided she would look through the servant's now unoccupied room and also the pantries. But this took only a short time. She stood looking out and down from the drawing-room window. She felt a sudden disgust for the house and wondered if there would not be time enough to slip out, get on a street car and ride down as far as her old home. In all these days she had not ventured back to that neighborhood. Of course, her aunt was not in town, but merely to see the house once more would be a satisfaction. But da Veiga would come home early, and she must not be away. She opened the piano and tried to play, but her fingers were stiff; the piano gave out a dull, perfunctory sound. She went back to the window, and looking into the street again, saw a woman, tall, slender, rather shabby, moving slowly along the opposite side. Her inactive mind considered the question irresolutely whether or not there were other women worse off than herself.

Then her brain became possessed of one single agonizing, fascinating interrogation: "How long ago was that . . . other woman?" The horror of that thought was like a suffocating weight. More than once before da Veiga had left the house she had started to ask him—to beg him to tell her when—how long since—he had come from Europe with—that woman—the woman who had wanted him to marry her—who had loved him, probably. Each time she had felt herself grow pale. And now he was gone, and she could not ask him. She could only fall to thinking again about . . . if the woman had loved him. And from that to considering her own feeling for him—if it had been love—or affection . . . and what love was—and what affection—and what had brought about her . . . affection for him . . . or . . . or love? . . . She had not been attracted by his personality. The title she had made him promise to lay aside—she had not wanted American friends to ridicule them. She recalled again the days of the early Spring—the visit from her Aunt Ester, and especially the night at the Claytons', when da Veiga had stood bowing and bending over her chair and telling of his escape out of the Argentine. Incidents of the days that followed flashed back upon her—the afternoons in which he had called; the breaking of her aunt's teacup; the chance meeting in the Avenue and the untruths she had told about going at once to the country; her endeavor to get rid of the cup and saucer he had bought; her flight to the Dows'; the mocking laughter of the ragged urchin into whose hands she had thrust the offending china. And after that—another morning—was it not the very next?—when the sky was full of clouds and soft Spring rain was falling, and she, setting forth to the shops to make purchases for her aunt, and turning the corner suddenly, fell almost into the arms of da Veiga. And his first question, that had caused her heart to swell up and choke her:

"Why you did give to one streety boy that cop which I did buy and bring to you?"

The consuming mortification of that moment, too intense for forgetting; the dumbness that had stricken her, the helplessness, the silence that had lasted until he had said: "You see, I understand. She make you to be one 'fred yong lady. That is it."

She recalled his story of having followed her, having seen with his own eyes what she had done, and of having repurchased his spurned offering; and her continued, helpless silence that had seemed to create a sort of confidence between them; and next in the chain of events her attempt to atone for wounding his feelings by kind interest in what he had to say of himself and the gigantic enterprise in which he was engaged—the company which should send enormous vessels to the new South American pearl fisheries, the monopoly of which was in his hands as a government concession—his purpose to reap rich reward—millions—as his share; and then—his plans to go back to South America.

She considered the growth of the strangely begotten confidence between them, which had led her to forget wholly how he had seemed to her at first; the confidence which had seemed to efface recollection of his impressive peculiarities and of whatever amusement or ridicule they had excited formerly during his calls at her aunt's house; which had seemed to foster indifference to the view her aunt or others might take of her encouragement of the friendship of this man, and which had seemed, on the whole, to yield a sort of consolation for real or fancied disappointments or repressions of the past; the confidence which had caused her to return unmovedly the surprised glances of her friend, Alice Dow, who by chance had met her in da Veiga's company on the Avenue—the Dows not having yet gone to their country house in the Orange Mountains; the enmeshing, engrossing confidence into

which she had felt herself slipping under the power of his unfaltering devotion and her own restless desires.

However lighted by these swift flashes of recollection, her brain still felt sluggish and oppressed, and at the end recurred inevitably the same old torturing question as to the time when that other woman had troubled his existence. She tried to form an approximate idea. It could not have been the year previous, for then he was in South America, fighting in border wars. It could not have been the year before that. He had not been in Europe for five or six years, perhaps, except when on his way up from the Argentine—the roundabout route by which travelers usually came to the United States—in the February not yet six months past. It could not have been then, for he had not loitered in Paris. He had brought the Severino Gonzalez letter very speedily to her Aunt Ester. She remembered her Aunt Ester said so. Besides, he could not—no, he could not. . . . It was six years past, and the woman was dead and she must not be recalled. Five-year graves held only skeletons. She must forget.

Looking down into the street again she saw loitering there the woman she had seen some time before; loitering and looking up at the building.

X

It occurred to her finally that it must be late and that, although she felt no sensation of hunger, it must be long past the dinner hour. Since dusk she had been lying on a small couch in the drawing-room bow window. Da Veiga had not come yet, although he had said particularly that he should be home early.

With a faint instinct of alarm she got up and lighted the gas, and at that moment was relieved to hear the apartment bell rung from the street entrance hall. As she went through to the kitchen to press the servant's button she noticed by the dining-room

clock that it was midnight. The elevator had stopped running and da Veiga would have to climb to the fifth floor. It was his ring, double and long continued. He had his key, but he wished to let her know that he had arrived and was ascending very slowly, sitting down at the foot of each flight to rest and recover his breath. She took matches and went into the passage to open the door leading to the outer hall, where, doubtless, the lights were low. As her hand turned the knob something on the carpet at her feet attracted her attention. She stooped and picked up a letter, which apparently had been slipped under the door. She went back, stood under the gas and read the address—“Mrs. da Veiga.” The scratchy, almost trembling writing looked so out of place on the good, thick linen paper that it suggested the hand of a menial. She tore open the envelope with uncomfortable premonitory sensations; it must be that the Swedish servant was going to be disagreeably in haste about the balance due her. The contents were brief:

A lady who must see Mrs. da Veiga on a private and important matter will call to-morrow at three precisely, and would request Mrs. da Veiga to meet her at the entrance of her house. As a matter of justice to one of her own sex this note should not be mentioned to *anyone* or *anyone* be informed of the appointment.

And below, as an afterthought:

If this is mentioned to *anyone* you may be prevented learning in time what you will later regret not having learned.

Refolding the sheet she placed it carefully in her bosom. She had read it twice, and now she heard da Veiga coming up the fourth and last flight. “*Hijo de—*” he was muttering thickly and breathlessly when he caught sight of her. “Why you did not go and esleep, poor my darling?” he inquired, with much solicitude, and closed the door behind him not too softly.

“You are very late,” said Alma, with a queer catch in her throat. She

was white and trembling from reading the anonymous note.

"I did want to come more early, and those peoples did make my stay." The heavy cane he carried fell out of his hand as he entered the drawing-room. "You did eat well, *querida*?" he questioned, as he arranged his hat, his cigarette case, his watch and a large envelope of papers severally and consecutively along the top of the piano.

Alma fell back from the arm he extended to encircle her. She moved farther across the room and stood looking at him over a chair.

"You might have let me know your intention to spend the evening as you did," she said, in a high, strange voice.

Da Veiga wheeled, and into his eyes came a startled expression. Her own had a light in them he had not seen before. There was silence, then Alma spoke again:

"The servant left at three. I have been alone for nine long hours, and I have had no dinner. If you had not said positively that you would come early——"

"Why you did let that big Swedie go out?" he thundered, with sudden anger. Then his voice dropped. "Poor my darling! And you 'ave not eat? Come with my, *querida*; I make one fine *cena*. On those immortal field of battle, in those graty wars, man' times we soldiers build those fire and make that coffee. But frest I put my slippers and my dress' gown."

She lingered some moments after he had gone out to the kitchen, and heard him striking matches, searching the ice-box in the butler's pantry and banging the gas range with the tea-kettle and other utensils in untutored, masculine manner until, her resentment melting to amusement, she had to follow out.

A savory smell pervaded the place. Señor da Veiga was smiling at the results of his labors. Meat and drink were actually preparing, as at a magician's touch. It only remained to lay a cloth in the dining-room.

The amusement of da Veiga increased. "That Swedie 'ave no key," he said, after a bit, shaking with laughter. "She 'ave no key to ope' that door outside. She stay cry there all the night."

"Why, I thought you understood," said Alma. "She is not coming back. She gave warning. She went to take care of someone who is sick—a cousin. She told me you had not paid her—for three months—since she came to work. I gave her twenty-five dollars—" She broke off, annoyed at the thought of the anonymous letter.

Da Veiga's laughter ceased abruptly. "You did pay to 'er? You are one fool! What right she 'ad to go 'way?"

As Alma was silent he said no further word, and when they presently sat down to sup he seemed again in very good humor.

"Now, my darling, we eat. Though I come late, yet so we eat well. *Querida*, give to my the big what you call *faca*—I cut the steak. And while we eat I tell to you, my darling, 'ow those peoples did make my to stay there at Delmonico's until near eight, and then they did make my to go to the 'ouse of one judge that will to buy some stock in our com-paneeyah. And there I talk to them like one *diablo*. To-day, *querida*, I 'ave take one office down town. I 'ave pay rent and buy carpet and desk and table and sofa. I 'ave spent match money." He divided the steak slowly in two unequal portions, passed a plate to Alma and sighed. "Tomorrow I did think to pay the rent, for we stay yet one month in this place. Then I did think for we go to Paris in that graty Exposition. You see by those days my com-paneeyah 'as begun; those ships 'ave gone to load with that beautiful concha—what you call *madreperla*. I close my office or I leave one boy. We go in that graty Fair." He got up and went to the ice-box for ice. "'Ere is vare warm," he said, and took his seat again, after emptying his glass. "'Ere is vare warm," he

repeated, as he cut deeper into the larger portion of meat on his own plate. Alma, watching with fascinated eyes, wondered if it could be possible he had really tasted anything since morning. She made no movement to take food, but presently began to pour the coffee. After this she watched him again, until he caught her eye and shouted at her: "Why you not eat?" She started, and clasped her hands on her bosom. "What is that?" he demanded.

"Something — nothing — a little pain," she stammered. "It seemed to stab me. It is gone." The sharp corner of the stiff envelope of the letter in her bosom had reminded her. Should she speak of it now or wait until morning?

He went on telling his plans. "Tomorrow, *querida*, I must go early down town. I do motch business. I sell some shares of my stock. I am vare sad that I most sell that, but I most 'ave money for we pay exespenses. You see I did put last month motch capital, I did exespend man' 'under' dollars. I did send man' cablegramas to South America. Gradill did I exespend to make sure my concession. Now I most sell. *Querida*, if you 'ave not give that ooglie Swede those twenty-five dollars, I borrow from you and I borrow more seventy-five from one friend, one vare nice man, and so I 'ave not to sell that stock. But now it is too late." He reached for his coffee and put a great many lumps of sugar into the cup. "You did give to'er all you did 'ave? Not is so, *querida*?"

"Oh, there is a little car-fare left, perhaps ten dollars," said Alma, jerkily.

Da Veiga drew another deep sigh and kept silence. Alma, sipping her coffee, gazed at her plate. She felt too worn with the day's mental experiences to discuss any subject, momentous or trivial. As for the anonymous letter, there would be time enough in the morning. If the Swede had complaint to make, let her

come in person and with less mystery.

"No," cried da Veiga, suddenly, and in a very resolute tone, "no, *querida*, I will not to take from you that little moneys. I sell my stock. Already I did borrow—'ow motch I did borrow, *querida*? When we did marry you did just 'ave receive your moneys. Not is so? One 'under' and fifty dollars! Now you will not 'ave more one 'under' and fifty until one month—maybe more long. Poor my darling! I fill shame I did borrow for we pay some bills." His plate was quite empty, and he reached for more coffee. "I go to get my cigarette 'older," he murmured, in melodious tones, and rose rather heavily. But Alma did not stir. She seemed to find fascination in the plate before her. Perhaps she was considering the strangeness of this honeymoon. Da Veiga came back and sat leaning an arm on the table while he smoked and finished his coffee.

"To-day, my darling," he said, presently, "I did pace by that 'ouse of your aunt. What fine 'ouse, and all shut up! I did think to myself what pity she is one such old *diablo*. *Querida*, why you don' try make frien'ship with your aunt, and so you get some moneys from 'er for we not sell our stock? *Querida*, I fill surry to sell those stock, which should be more thousands dollars. Your aunt is one rich woman—what she miss for give two 'under' fifty, maybe three 'under' or six 'under' dollars, and take your note? Not is so, *querida*? Then we go in that graty steamer next week."

It seemed to Alma she must be breathing very audibly. She had a feeling of extreme exhaustion. It seemed a tremendous effort to draw in her breath or expel it. To form words was still more difficult. They fell slowly from her lips: "You say the house is shut. My aunt is away. It would be hard to communicate with her."

"Why you cannot write one letter?"

She moved back her chair sharply

and rose. Standing so far an instant she caught sight of a white face and a white-gowned figure in the glass of the antique sideboard. The face, as colorless as the gown, had eyes more black and angry than she had ever seen. And it was her own face. "If I must borrow money," she said, in a voice that vibrated strangely, "it shall be from a stranger rather than from any relative." Then she went quickly from the room.

XI

It was lacking a minute of three when she stepped from the elevator and went toward the street. The great entrance doors swung noiselessly before and after her. She lifted her eyes from the hem of her gray cloth gown where she fancied a stray thread had caught, and saw coming up the steps the woman she had seen from her drawing-room window the day before loitering on the opposite side and glancing up. She felt positive at once that this was the person.

"You were looking for me—for Mrs. da Veiga?" she said.

The woman had reached the top step and paused to breathe for a few seconds. Alma's perceptions, quickened rather than sluggish, as on the previous afternoon, seized swiftly on certain points of her appearance. For one thing, the shabbiness of the woman now appeared more a shabbiness of gait and manner than of attire; for another, her tall and somewhat angular form was plainly quivering with excitement and vindictive purpose; so plainly, indeed, that the answer she presently gave seemed mild unto falsity: "I was looking for a lady of that name."

"Will you come up to my apartment?" said Alma, more coldly; "I am quite alone."

No further words passed between them until they had gone up in the elevator and Alma had led the way to her drawing-room. The woman did not sit at once. She walked over

to the bow window, stood there, and holding up a pair of eyeglasses that hung on a cord round her neck, took a long look at a crayon portrait of da Veiga above the piano. Then she sat down on the little sofa.

"You have no idea, I suppose, what I wish to speak to you about?" she began, in a slow, hard voice, as if she were arming herself with insolence now that she had gained entrance and audience.

Alma's reply was not of a kind to encourage. "I presume it was you who wrote to me. I suppose it is something about the servant that left yesterday. Of course, as she gave no notice—"

The woman threw out one long arm with a gesture of contempt approaching coarseness. "Your servant!" she cried. "You kept a servant! Well, I wonder who paid her! About a servant, eh? Do you know who I am? I am a victim—a dupe—" She sprang to her feet and flung out her other arm toward the picture over the piano—"the dupe—one of the dupes of that—that scoundrel! And you—you are another."

Alma sat very still in the large armchair—da Veiga's favorite chair—at the opposite side of the room. She was conscious, presently, of an arranged feeling, stiff and woodenish, such as she had felt as a child in a photograph gallery posing for her picture. She was cold, too; her hands were quite cold and her whole body seemed transfixed. It was like a nightmare she had experienced once, when she wanted to speak, to move, to cry out, and yet could not. She remembered that she had known that was a nightmare, and had seen with open eyes all objects in the room—just as she now saw the veriest unimportant things—the thread on the bottom of her gown which she had meant to pick off down in the entrance hall; the spot that might be ink—or wine—on her cuff; the atom of dust on the glass of the tiny watch in her parasol handle. And then she heard the woman's voice again, this time less strident.

"I don't wish to get excited; I generally know how to control my feelings. And besides, you are to be pitied as much as anyone. If you thought you were not married you'd be sorry at first, perhaps; but after a while you might be sorrier if you really were tied to him. I don't know if that's any consolation. In any case, our positions are about equal. For, even if that woman he represented to me to be in Europe had died before the church ceremony at All Asphodels', my interests as common-law wife will be protected. The law is just. He never once gave up his home with me. On the night of that wedding he was with me."

She paused as if expecting the girl to cry out. But Alma neither spoke nor stirred. Her pale face was expressionless. And the other went on, with a contraction of the mouth muscles and a moistening of her parched lips: "Yes, on the night of that wedding. Of course, I only knew what he told me when he came in—came home at seven. Said a cousin of his—a second cousin, who happened to be a namesake—had arrived in this country and had married an heiress. He had met him at the Consulate, and it had been a great surprise. He had had to go to the church and a wedding breakfast afterward, and he had kissed the bride, though she was nothing as to looks. He told what they had eaten and drunk at the breakfast and everything else to me, and said he hadn't enjoyed it without me. He had wished I was there, and was so glad to get home and take off his coat and drink coffee. He would spend the evening quietly with me, from seven till nearly eleven; then he had promised to go and sleep at the apartment his cousin had taken and furnished, while the bridal couple went to Washington on their wedding trip. He was kinder and more affectionate than usual, and kept talking about our being married by a minister in the Fall. He never left me until eleven; then he was sleepy and tired, and grumbled because he had to get up from the bed where he was

having a nap so comfortably and go out again. It is hard for me to imagine what excuse a man could possibly make to a bride for such an absence at such a time or for returning in such a temper."

She laughed, and the laugh was not a good one to hear. The sound jarred on Alma with such force as partially to break the nightmare spell and restore power of utterance. "Who are you?" she asked, faintly.

"Who am I?" the woman cried, with fresh fury. "Who am I? I am the woman that found him sick and starving in Paris, that nursed him through a long, terrible fever; that never left him night or day; that came back to New York in the steerage—you hear?—the *steerage* of the ship, in order to have money to bring him with me; the woman that he vowed by his dead mother's grave to honor and protect. You want to know my name? It is Barbara—he calls me Bébé—well, just as much Barbara da Veiga as yours is Alma da Veiga." Again she paused and seemed to expect some outburst, but none came. "That's the name I'm known by over there in Twenty-fourth street," she went on. "They pronounce it Veega. That was his home there with me, in Twenty-fourth street, near Eighth avenue. Perhaps you know the neighborhood. It is quiet and decent; there are theatrical people, but not the bad kind. He lived there until this marriage—*of his cousin*—a few weeks ago. After that he explained to me he would have to sleep at their apartment—so that they might be able to testify to his blameless character when he began his suit against his first wife in the Autumn. But he spent his afternoons and evenings at home as usual. It was comfortable—he liked to be there. I got home as early as I could. We had two large rooms on the second floor—it is a furnished-room house. In the front room are his desk and the sofa, and there is a large alcove off with the bed. In the back room we had a table and a gas stove. Between the rooms are two closets with running water and an ice-

box. Two people can live very comfortably in that way. I had the walls all covered with pretty pictures. Then it was very convenient—the running water and all. One could save a great deal by washing handkerchiefs and small things. That night after he had gone—that *wedding* night—I felt so lonely I stayed up till two o'clock, and washed and ironed so many little articles for him." Yet again she paused and waited—and went on: "It was mere chance that my suspicions were aroused by a man following him there to collect a bill—rent, for this very apartment, too. I happened to be at home. I am a forewoman. Two people have two mouths to feed, and there are clothing and other expenses. I was home, and the man let out something about being tired of calling and being put off by da Veiga or told that he wasn't at home. 'In a few days,' he said, 'if that rent isn't paid you will get notice to vacate.' Nine hundred a year! A good rent for a man without a penny of income! You see now his true character."

Alma leaned forward and cried out—a queer, guttural, gasping cry. Then she found she could speak.

"I wish," she said, distinctly, "that you would leave this room at once. I have read of such creatures as you—and their lies."

The other woman sprang to her feet, hesitated and sat down again. "I am not going yet. There is more for you to hear, and you had better hear it."

Alma had turned her face away; she turned it back now and looked at this other—this angular, flaxen-haired, keen-eyed woman with large nose and pale lips, who had come with him from Europe, who had found him starving and dying, who had nursed him through terrible illness, who had traveled in the steerage, who had been with him for four long hours on his *wedding* night. A great chill was beginning to shake her. She remembered so well his absence during those hours—how he accounted for it by the story of a countryman,

recently arrived, who could speak no English, who had been arrested by mistake, and had sent for him to get him liberated; how he had returned at eleven, how strange and indifferent his conduct had been, and how he had let her retire and sat smoking his cigarettes long after midnight on his *wedding* night! The chill shook her from head to foot. She remembered the story of Don Ernesto, who had married the daughter of the President of a republic in South America—the gossip about his spending his *wedding* night with the Indian woman, Maria, and her children, and his having married Doña Elvira merely to stand firm with her father and succeed him in the Presidency—the story that had seemed so detestable to her innocent wisdom and wise innocence of fifteen. The chill was followed by a sort of moral nausea, in some great spasm of which she felt that she might easily eject the heart from her body.

"The sooner you know all the truth the better," the woman persisted; "the main thing is, where is that first wife?"

"Whom—what do you mean by 'first wife'?" asked Alma, in a thick voice.

"I mean the Englishwoman he married a few years ago in London. She owned some property, but she was shrewd. What did she want with a penniless adventurer whose only occupation was flirtations with other women? She left him, you understand. Nobody cared for him—nobody wanted him. That was how I had pity for him. I thought he would reform and make a good Christian man if he had a chance. It wasn't that I wanted anyone's husband. He was alone, adrift in the world. I gave him shelter and help. Has anyone but me a right to him? Has anyone else done as much for him? Has he got any money out of you yet—or out of your relatives? You are the heiress, I suppose. Perhaps he has tried and not succeeded. As for that other woman—he has her picture somewhere here in this very apartment. He told me that he hated her so that he spat on her portrait and cut it

with a knife, and finally put his own in front of it in the same frame. I think it is that one on the piano. Do you mind if I take it down and see if it is there?"

"Why should I mind what you do?" asked Alma, in the same thick voice, and shivering as she spoke.

The woman looked round the room. "I can stand on that thing; I suppose it's the piano stool," she said, in a matter-of-fact way; "I am tall enough."

Still Alma did not move. Her white face was turned toward the other, who had climbed up and was leaning over against the piano top and lifting the heavy frame. The wire fell easily from the gilt hook on the moulding. "It will take only a moment to see," she said, and as she spoke she knelt on the Indian rug before the piano, pulling the little nails from the back of the frame. The board fell out softly on the rug, and following the board came a picture that was not the crayon of da Veiga. It was an old-fashioned photograph enlarged in water colors. She held it up triumphantly.

"You see how he cut and gashed it," she said. "But it is the woman—his wife. On the bottom of it, here, is the name, Maria da Veiga. Do you want to look at it closer? What's the matter? You ain't fainting, are you?"

Alma's head had fallen back in the chair. Her face was pallid and her eyes closed. "No," she said, feebly, "I am not—fainting. But—I see no good in discussing—these matters. I shall be glad if you will excuse me now." She got up as she spoke the last word, staggered into the bedroom and fell on the bed. Her hat fell off, and she sat up again, holding her parasol tightly, like a drunken person who would not give up. She heard the woman putting up the picture. And after what might have been seconds or moments or hours, for all that she could tell, she heard her ask if she wanted a glass of water or brandy or anything. And after another indefinite period she heard

the outer door of the apartment close with a loud sound.

She sat up in a sort of ringing silence and listened as if afraid the woman might return. After a little she got off the bed and looked out into the drawing-room; the picture hung in its accustomed place, and she wondered if it could all have been an ugly dream. She advanced a few steps and saw on the rug slivers of wood that had come from the board back of the picture, together with two small nails. Stooping, she picked up these and carried them out to the kitchen. Then she came back, took a long look round the room and fell to the floor by the little sofa.

XII

SHE was walking faster than she had ever before walked in her life. She had put on her sailor hat again, which had fallen off when she fell on the bed, and she carried the parasol with the watch in the handle. It was after six, and the last train by which she might have gone to seek her aunt at the seaside had left at half-past four. She was not sure what she meant to do, except that she would not pass the night in the apartment. She thought she would go to a hotel. But first she would make certain that the woman had told the truth. She would go to Twenty-fourth street and find the place.

Her entire body seemed on fire. She felt like one floating through a field of flame. If the woman had spoken untruths—but there were such horrid symptoms of truth! The wedding night, the coming from Europe, the defaced picture back of his own picture! How could that woman have invented suggestions about his trying to get money from—her relatives? It seemed to her that she flew on her way in a sort of sirocco. It was a close, humid August night, but she was hot with dry fever heat—the suffocating heat of anger, bit-

ter, impotent, raging anger, like that of a child locked in a room. Where was he at that moment? Was he over there in Twenty-fourth street—with the very woman who had denounced him? Why had she not made the woman say if she still intended to—protect and succor him? She flew on across the square, across Broadway. She did not know or care whether she passed one person or a thousand persons. She was soon in Twenty-fourth street, a street of queer inhabitants. The sidewalks were crowded with loiterers, but she saw none clearly. Under the elevated railway and on through the next block and on into the next she flew. And there she stopped, suddenly remembering the woman had not told her the house number. She must inquire at every door in the block. She leaned against a railing for a moment, then went on, then stopped again. On the opposite side, farther down, almost at the end, coming slowly along, pausing, turning, ascending the steps, opening the door with a latchkey, she saw da Veiga. There was no mistaking his figure and carriage.

At that instant she felt as if her body were being compressed in one of those old sixteenth century instruments of torture that she had seen in pictures.

After a long while she went on across the block, looking up at the second-story windows of that house, with their old-fashioned green slat shutters. She got aboard a car, and by-and-bye saw that she was at Fifty-ninth street, near the Park. Alighting, she went into the Park. It was still quite light. She walked through to Fifth Avenue and kept on eastward. Before long she found herself on the elevated railway, riding southward again. She rode to the end, got off and took a boat that went some place where it was brighter and noisier than at the South Ferry. She came back in the same boat and traveled up to Forty-second street. The next she knew she was at the Grand Central Station, caught in a swarm-

ing crowd that had just come from some train.

The stream swirled her over across the street to a hotel entrance, and she went in and up to the parlor. While the boy had gone to get a card for her to register she sat where she could see herself in a mirror. Through all her mental confusion the instinct of gentility impressed her with the necessity that her hat should be properly adjusted, her hair neatly arranged and her expression composed. The flush in her face was but natural in the intense Midsummer heat. Other instincts—largely of self-preservation, perhaps—caused her to write her name “Mrs. A. Sylvester” and for address merely “City.”

The room assigned her was small, with one window giving on an inner court. It was not very high up, and kitchen sounds ascended incessantly. The heat was great. She had an idea that if she turned out the gas, removed her clothing and lay down on the bed she might feel calmer. The night was before her in which to think out what to do and prepare herself to do it. Thus far she saw but one course—to confront him with what she had heard and insist on knowing the truth. Had he ever married any other woman? Who and what was Maria da Veiga? What rights, if any, had Barbara da Veiga? Was there such a person as Alma da Veiga? These questions must all be settled. Until she had his reply to them she would do nothing rash. She was glad there had been no train to the seaside. She felt that she did not wish to go to her aunt until she had heard his answer. In the morning she would go back to the apartment and confront him—“confront” was precisely the word. It gave her a sense of resoluteness to repeat it. She wished she could sleep all night and waken strong and composed in the morning, but the heat was intolerable. She tossed from side to side as the hours wore on toward midnight, and wondered if he had yet arrived at the apartment and found her gone. She won-

dered what he would do; would he make any outcry—ask any questions of anyone? Would he have already been told by the woman Barbara that Alma had learned such things from her? Would he be waiting her return? Would he go out to look for her? What would he say in the morning when she returned? What should she first say to him? Suppose he should break down and confess that this horrible thing was true—that he had been married before and that his wife was in Europe? What must she do then? Must she go to her Aunt Sevenbanks—or first to a lawyer? Should she ask for a divorce or for an annulment of her marriage? How could it be kept secret? How could the frightful and intolerable vulgarity of newspaper publicity be avoided? How could she escape seeing her name in print? Would the lawyer advise her to go to Dakota? She closed her eyes and breathed hard. If sleep would only come!

With her eyes shut she seemed to see everywhere the letter "D" blazing at her—and sometimes the word "Dakota," and sometimes the word "divorce." Once worn to exhaustion she seemed to have sunk out of the heat into darkness—the darkness of a cool and illimitable tropical wood. She was a child again, lost in that equatorial forest as once when she was five years old. And Pepe and Chavela, the servants, were searching as then for her, half-crazed at their own negligence. And she was afraid of the darkness and was praying, as she had often heard Chavela pray to the Holy Virgin, to bring someone to find her; and a huge form came out of the shadow of a tree, a horrible shape of wild beast lifting a tremendous paw like a bear's with which to fell her to the ground; and the head seemed to turn strangely familiar, and the eyes became da Veiga's eyes. And she awoke, gasping.

She lay down again, for it was only two o'clock by the parasol watch. Other little intervals of dozing came

to her. Sometimes she saw the interior of those Twenty-fourth street rooms. Da Veiga was there at ease in slippers and smoking jacket. The woman, Barbara, was darning socks for him. Sometimes she was in a court of law, with greedy eyes devouring her, newspaper artists sketching her, a lawyer questioning her, and the judge's voice, deciding deliberately, and in a tone that terrified her: "The marriage is null and void." Sometimes she saw her Aunt Sevenbanks, bowed, silent, overwhelmed with disgrace. Then the woman Barbara would reappear, tall, angular, keen-eyed and large-nosed, resolute and self-justifying. "Who else wanted him? I succored him. Who else had a right to him?" Sometimes huge heads seemed thrusting themselves against her, half-human, with under lips distorted by inserted bits of stone or bone. And a hoarse whisper, issuing from nowhere, yet everywhere, proclaimed, "The Bugres—that live on their fellow men—the devourers of their kind—the Bugres." And again she was sinking in dark waters over which black boats were floating, with white sails made from huge newspapers printed in enormous type, with the words "Dakota" and "divorce" everywhere.

Toward daybreak she might have slept an hour or two, dreaming then a curious medley of comedy and tragedy in which her Aunt Ester and her Aunt Sevenbanks, da Veiga and Barbara, herself and the Swedish servant were paired in a sort of procession, until running toward them at great speed came the woman of the gashed portrait, wringing her hands and sobbing that her face had been destroyed. Then Alma sat up in bed and looked at the window. It was daylight, and an unbearable clatter of dishes came up from the restaurant kitchen. She reached for the parasol and saw that it was six o'clock. She rose and dressed. She had no comb or brush, but smoothing the sides of her hair with hands she found that her hat

cover the worst of her disarray. Her face looked swollen even after much cold water, but she took special pains with her collar and cuffs. The servants were astir in the halls, but she met no one else as she went out. She knew that the outside doors of the apartment house would be open, and if the elevator were not yet running, so much the better. She could enter unobserved and walk up stairs. The morning air was cool and refreshing, and her strength and courage returned.

She ran up the stairway so lightly that she was hardly out of breath at all when she opened the apartment door with her key and walked down the passage. The gas was burning, as it had probably burned all night, in the drawing-room. In the dining-room the rising sun was glaring on everything, and full in the glare, at the table, in his accustomed place, with a cup of black coffee before him and his cigarette holder in his mouth, in *négligé*, as usual, and smoking and shedding slow tears, sat da Veiga. He sat still and looked at her; then suddenly he uttered a loud wail of interrogation:

"With what man you did go 'way?"

XIII

SHE crossed the room and sat down facing him. Her glance then fell on another object—his razor, half-open, on the table—and her first words were commonplace. "You were going to shave?"

He answered with the cigarette holder in his mouth: "I did think to cut my throat; then I did think to wait and see." He drew a sobbing breath. "I never did think my wife to go and leave my."

"When you say 'wife,'" said Alma, with a composure that was like a numbness, "to whom do you refer? Myself, or one of the other two? Is it Barbara—or is it the woman whose picture is in there?"

Da Veiga seemed not to have understood. He gazed at her with eyes

in which a dark flame was kindling. "You look vare fine," he said, with a dull sort of fury; "vare nice you look, with that white, small 'at and those red mouth. Nice little parasol with one watch—all so fine. Why did you come back?" The fury increased. "Why did you come back?" he shouted, with a look of hatred.

"You have not answered my question," said Alma, ignoring his temper. "Perhaps you did not understand me—it is foolish to say insulting things. You know perfectly well why I left this house last night and went alone to a hotel. The woman who calls herself Barbara da Veiga must have told you she was here yesterday afternoon and that she informed me I was not your wife. You could not expect me to remain after that. I had not intended to return, but it seemed only right to give you a chance to defend yourself. In any event, it will be for my lawyer to look into the matter at once. The record of any marriage between yourself and the Maria da Veiga whose portrait hangs behind your own——"

He sprang up with an imprecation. "Who did tell to you——?"

"She says you call her Bébé——"

"That *diablo*! Oh——" He fell into his seat again. "Querida, I did wish to confess all to you. I did tell to you 'ow she will that I marry with 'er and 'ow she try to make my live always with 'er. I did tell to you that she care for my when I 'ave one *fiebre* and did come with my from Paris. I 'ave try so 'ard to break from 'er—I 'ave give 'er money—vare motch moneys 'ave I give. All that I can do to 'er for make we separate good friends. Still, she is one *diablo*. She write to my, she come, she 'ang on my back. Now she try for make my wife to leave my. I did tell to 'er long months past, when we did come in that graty ship, I did tell to 'er I cannot marry with 'er. I did tell 'er one lie—'ow I did 'ave already one wife. I did show to 'er one picture of one lady in that Argentine—one lady did marry with my cousin. I did say that was my wife, Maria.

Querida, I am one poor man, vare sad, with motch troubles. I did try so 'ard, and I did think she let my be. She is one old woman, with one big nose; vare ooglie is she, and I never did love 'er. Man' letters I receive from 'er and she baig and baig I go there. I go yesterday and she say she go 'way—in Europa, and she want money. I 'ave to give to 'er motch money. Now I am poor—I need for we pay exespenses. 'Ow I can give to 'er that money for to go in Europa?" Fresh tears came to his eyes. "All I 'ave pray for in this world is for we live 'appy and good. I did tell you, *querida*, 'ow I did do motch wickedness, and now I do no more. Last night I did read in my *libro de devociones*, as my mother did tell to me, and I did pray to 'eaven to bring back my wife."

Alma rose and went into the drawing-room and turned out the gas. He followed and watched her. She went on into the bedroom, took off her hat and the bodice of her dress and put on a dressing sacque, then began to comb her hair. He followed and sat on the bed. "You will not speak to my, *querida*?" he inquired, piteously.

"I have nothing to say just at present," she answered, and went on combing her hair. She was not quite sure what she thought of his explanations. She was still suffering moral nausea, though not as intensely as the day before. One of the two had told falsehoods; there was untruth on one side or the other, even if the tragic aspect were eliminated and his fault reduced to a simple, ugly intrigue of the past with the woman Barbara. She felt a natural hatred for this woman, who had caused her such night-long suffering, and still her sense of justice framed excuses for the poor creature.

"I am vare sad, *querida*," said da Veiga, mournfully, "that I did tell to you one lie."

"One lie?" She gave the numeral emphasis. She was still brushing her hair. It seemed to her there had never been so many tangles in it. She turned to look at him.

"I did tell to you that she was dead. I am vare sad. I should tell to you she write to my and worry my man' times. Now you will not believe. But I prove to you."

"Yes," said Alma, "I shall require proof." She felt a sort of regret that she could be so unmoved; she knew from this that she had no love, nothing but pity for him. "I shall require proof," she repeated, "that I have a right to remain here; proof that you never have married any other woman. You must satisfy me of that." She had finished brushing her hair, and was coiling it at the back of her head. "You might pour me a cup of coffee," she added.

Da Veiga got up from the bed and preceded her back to the dining-room. She saw that he still carried the razor with him, and remarked that he would better put it away unless he meant to shave at once.

Two hours later she sat alone again. He had gone down town to try to realize something on his pearl fishery concession stock. He had reiterated his sore need of money for current expenses and also to give the woman, so that she would go abroad and leave them in peace.

Alma sat reflecting and trying to decide on a course of action. Should she try to get an advance from the lawyer—her aunt's man of business—who had charge of her own small quarterly income? Supposing she obtained sufficient for the woman, Barbara—she wondered how much would be required. A queer pity was in her heart for da Veiga, inspired in great measure by his financial distress. It seemed to her that however great his fault, she could not desert him just now.

With a sudden sensation of exhaustion she lay down and slept. She did not wake until he came home.

XIV

SHE had once before had occasion to go alone to call on the lawyer, whose office was in lower Broadway.

That other time she had been driven down in her aunt's coupé—it was Winter—and she had had only to go up in the elevator and send in her card to Mr. Travis. This time there was no coupé, but a tiresome walk from the City Hall station. The trucks and the cable cars were thick, and the men on the sidewalks jostled and elbowed her, and were altogether brutes. She felt flushed and cross by the time she reached the office. But Travis having not yet returned from luncheon, she had to wait awhile in his private room, and when he finally arrived she was much cooler. He was a tall, lank man with a beard and a melancholy smile, but he sighed contentedly like one of honest intentions.

"Good morning, Miss Sylves—oh, I beg your pardon, you married a Spaniard—de—de—"

"South American," she corrected. "My name is da Veiga."

He smiled tranquilly. "Rather informal, though, wasn't it? I mean, you didn't go in for any of the fashionable nonsense that uses up so much money these hard times."

"Quite true," she answered, with calm indifference. "Speaking of money, Mr. Travis, that is what I came down for. I want some—ahead of time, you know; that is, if I can get it."

The lawyer lifted his eyebrows. "Why—" he said, in a vague tone.

"It can be managed in some way, can't it?" she insisted, with a little impatience. "You see, if one wanted to go over to Paris, for example, it would cost a trifle. Sefior da Veiga," she colored slightly, "has not much to spare just now. He is engrossed heart and soul and pocketbook in the new company he has organized. A pearl fishery company, you know. It is going to be a great—"

"Pearl fishery? Where?" The lawyer was interested.

"Why, South America—an island off the coast—he came to New York to form the company."

"Incorporated?" the gentleman inquired.

She hesitated. "I believe so."

Mr. Travis leaned his elbow on his desk and rested his face on his palm. He regarded her with eyes of mild scrutiny. "Well, then," he observed, "you didn't do so badly, after all, did you? I had an idea you married one of those—well, usual foreign counts, you know. There *was* a title, wasn't there?"

"Sefior da Veiga inherits a title," said Alma, with a little girlish stiffness. "But he is an ardent republican. We never use it. Count Geraldina is the title," she added.

"Geraldina." The lawyer repeated the name in a meditative way. The melancholy expression unhidden by his beard gave no clue to his thoughts. He might have been considering irrelevant questions, or he might have been smiling inwardly at the symptoms so familiar to the practiced eye and ear, so misleading to others. He could have told of so many cases where the devotion was most aggressively apparent, the attachment most strenuously insisted on, the excess—or access—of loyalty most vividly displayed on the very eve of the tragic *dénouement*—of the skeleton's discovery. "Well," he said, suddenly, "and you want some money to waste in Paris? By the way, I haven't inquired how Mrs. Sevenbanks is—and that reminds me, I have a letter here for you, from Paris, I think. It has been here some time." He got up and went to a small safe. Alma kept silence until he had finished with the combination. Then she said, frankly enough, "You know my Aunt Sevenbanks did not approve of my marriage, and I have not seen her since that time. She is at the seashore, I suppose."

He closed the safe, came back and handed her a letter. The blood crept into her face at the superscription. "From my aunt, Mrs. Harding—addressed to my maiden name—I suppose she forgot—she must have heard—with your permission." She tore open the envelope nervously. There were but a few lines in the neat, Spanish hand, assuring "dearest

Alma" that if she felt like coming across to join the writer she would be most welcome at any instant, and to be sure to write. But there was also a draft for a hundred and fifty dollars. "Perhaps after all I shall not need the advance I came to ask for," said Alma, showing him the draft.

He cleared his throat. "Now that was thoughtful of her. But this pearl fishing company that you spoke of. I wonder if I know any of the men in it. Who are the directors? I suppose it is no secret."

Alma remembered there was a Mr. Deane.

"Not Wilson Deane? I know him well. But he has been in Europe these eight or ten months, at the baths—I forget which. It must be some other."

"No," she said, a little irritably, "I am sure it is Wilson Deane. And there is a Mr. Shellingworth and George Stone—"

"George Stone? I know him, too. Funny how quiet it has been kept! I generally hear a good deal about such things. The newspapers haven't got on to it."

"I don't know—I never read newspapers," said Alma. "They make one's arms ache so to hold them."

He laughed. "A new objection. I thought you were going to say they print such horrid crimes." His pensive gaze followed her movements reluctantly as she got up to go. "I am glad to have had the pleasure of seeing you and giving you that letter, and also to have learned about the—the enterprise that Señor da Veiga—is that right? I never can pronounce Spanish—"

"That's right," said Alma, with a smile that was not by any means care-free. He let her out direct by the private door and went back to his desk. Alone in the hall and unobserved, she stooped to refasten a shoelace. On her way to the elevator she had to pass the open door of the larger office. Travis was there talking with another gentleman, not his partner. They were laughing, with unlighted cigars in their mouths.

She wondered a little that the lawyer would care to talk freely with a man who kept his hat on and tipped it over on one side and used coarse language. "Hang it, Travis," she heard him say, "I tell you I never heard of the fellow or any such scheme. I believe it's all a fake."

She had to hurry to reach the bank before three o'clock. The teller knew her and there would be no delay. From the very instant of possessing the draft she had been resolved on a certain course—to go to the woman Barbara and offer her a hundred dollars with which to go abroad, and to give the other fifty to da Veiga. He had said that fifty would see him through until he got another remittance from South America—his coffee money. The only thing for their peace of mind, he had convinced her, was to have the woman Barbara on the other side of the ocean.

It was hardly four when she reached Twenty-fourth street. The servant who opened the door said that "Mrs. Veega" would soon be home, and there was a parlor to wait in. Alma had waited nearly an hour when the front door opened and the fair-haired Amazon came in.

"I wish to see you," said Alma, stepping into the hall. "May I go up stairs with you?" It flashed on her how oddly their positions were reversed since that other afternoon. But she was so full of her own plan that she did not mind.

"Oh, it's you?" The woman paused on the staircase. "Come up," she said, authoritatively.

When the door was closed Alma looked round the room. Everything was as it had been described to her: the desk, the alcove, the bed, the closets and the ice-box. Da Veiga's silver-handled umbrella stood in a corner. Under the desk was a pair of enormous slippers. This gave her a shock. There were pictures on the wall. The doors were open through to the other room, where were the dining-table and the gas stove. Everything was true.

Alma coughed faintly, to gain time. She lacked words for a beginning. The purse in her hand, in which she had separately the fifty and the hundred dollar rolls, felt a clumsy, brazen thing.

"I wondered," said Barbara, after her caller was seated, "how you treated him that night when he went back to your apartment." She smiled grimly. "He was here till quite late. I said nothing until he was leaving. Then I said, 'Yes, go to the other one now. Perhaps she'll give you a warmer reception—when she knows about your first marriage and what you owe to me.' He only laughed and answered, 'Bébé, you know well before God we are 'onorable. Not long off we marry in church. Then we live 'appy. Bébé, you are my all; you will not forsake my.' He did not come yesterday. I was afraid at moments that—that he might have killed you. The pistol is here, but then he had the razor."

Alma trembled for an instant. "Why should he harm me?" she asked. "I have never thought of being afraid. Besides, he gave me a satisfactory explanation."

"He gave you an explanation!" the other repeated, in a tone of amazement. "He told you—the first wife—is dead?"

Alma felt herself suffocating. She had gone beyond her depth—the water was closing over her head. She had not stopped to think of what she must say. Now she saw that the woman would demand to know all. How could she tell her there had never been any other wife—that he had invented a previous marriage story—that he—! There was nothing she could say. She paused and stammered: "I—am his legal wife; I—claim no other right—I have no doubt your moral claim is as strong. But you have turned against him, and my duty seems plain. I must not desert him—it is not a question of love. I made a mistake and I must bear the consequences. You hate him and want to be free from

him. I do not blame you, for he has acted wickedly toward you. It is no wonder you call him scoundrel and want to be far away from him. He told me of your wish to go to Europe, and I found I could help you a little—so I came." The words formed themselves with difficulty, and the purse seemed more brazen and shamelessly thick than before. "I came to bring you the money. It isn't much—a hundred dollars. You can go very nicely for eighty, I think. It is only giving you back a little of your own, you know—of what you have expended for him in the past, I mean. There is no use of trying to palliate his fault—no use even to discuss it. I shall only try to do my duty."

The woman had stood up and was looking down on her. "He told you—that I—wished to go to—Europe?" she repeated, slowly, with a faint, pale smile. "And that—I wanted money—to go—?"

Alma also rose. "Yes, he told me." She opened the purse and took out the larger roll. "I shall have more in a month," she said. "If I knew where to send it—I want to feel that you will not be in need. There are steamers to-morrow and Saturday." She held out the bills with an impulsive gesture.

The other fell back a step. "You come here to offer me money?"—there was a grinding sound in her utterance—"to offer me money?"—the reddish down on her cheeks and her reddish eyebrows stood out queerly over her dead-white face—"money to go to Europe? You, who haven't the shadow of right to the name of wife—come to buy me off—me who support him, who put bread in his mouth, life in his body—me who went to you and told you the truth as a friend and as woman to woman—you offer me money? I spit on your money and on you! I fling it back in your face—I defy you—I despise you—I drive you from my sight!"

The next that was clear to Alma's comprehension she was in the street,

a block away from the place. She was running quite fast—in one hand her purse, in the other the roll of bills. There was a pain in her shoulder and through her chest. The woman had struck her—had struck her a hard blow in that whirlwind of fury—the creature had actually struck her. The creature—Rufino was right—she was a *diablo*, and worse. Perhaps he was not so greatly at fault, after all. All this was vague and but half-acknowledged in her thoughts. She knew she had made some blunder in going there. “The creature would have taken the money from *him*,” she said to herself. “It was only because it was I. I was stupid—terribly stupid not to have foreseen. My shoulder—she struck me with her clenched hand—I shall remember.”

She had recovered from her dazed condition by the time she arrived at the apartment. Da Veiga was already there. She found him in the dining-room, smoking and drinking black coffee. “Where you did go, my love?” he asked, looking up at her with bloodshot eyes.

“To the lawyer,” she answered, after a moment of thought.

“You did get no money?” There was evidence of great strain in his voice.

“My Aunt Ester sent me a little. If it will be of any use, Rufino, I have fifty dollars.”

He fell forward on his knees at her feet. “Oh, my love, you save my life! I was near to despair. That man—my friend, 'e did go 'way; until two weeks 'e stay. My love, my own true wife!”

She handed him the purse; she had withheld the hundred-dollar roll and placed it in her pocket. She made no mention of it. Other emergencies might confront them, she now felt, and she desired to be prepared. After a little she saw da Veiga putting on his coat to go out, and she offered no word to stay him. She imagined he was going to take the money to that woman. Perhaps the

woman would accept it from *him*. Perhaps she would go to Europe, after all—or elsewhere. At any rate, there was nothing further Alma could think to do. She felt she was powerless and must merely let things happen.

XV

FILMY golden light steeped the level lands about the little railway station as a chattering party of seven descended from the parlor car. It was a good half-mile to the hotel, and the hotel stage seemed at the first glance inadequate. Yet laughingly, as the train pulled away and left them, the newcomers moved toward this smaller vehicle. A short, dark man, very correct in dress, escorted a stout lady of middle age and good-natured expression; two young ladies, one much fairer than the other, but clearly sisters; a youth, as precise in apparel as the gentleman ahead; finally another lady, in whose face a certain youthfulness lingered, accompanied by a gentleman of thirty or more, tall in figure and quiet mannered. The first and second couples conversed in words entirely unintelligible to the natives; the three that followed spoke English. The youth, who had a downy mustache and resembled his good-natured mamma, lingered back with the others. “Well,” he remarked, “this is all your doing, Mrs. Harding. We start for Saratoga, where we have many times found pleasure, and we find ourselves out in a strange country, a desert of cornfields.”

“Never mind, Pepito,” said Ester Harding, “you will not be sorry. You wished to go to Saratoga, which is hot and stupid. I persuade you to go to a cool place by the sea, is it not so, Don Roberto?” she turned to the tall gentleman, who bowed and smiled—“where there are beautiful young ladies who will dance with you at the casino.”

They were all nicely seated in the stage, filling it comfortably, when

someone came running out after them. It was the station-master. "Take this along with you," he cried to the driver. "Parcel for Mrs. Sevenbanks."

The whip cracked and they rolled off. "My sister-in-law is here, it seems," said Mrs. Harding, with an innocent look at the grave young man beside her. He made no reply, but appeared interested in the landscape.

Five minutes had carried them by the sleepy corn and vegetable gardens; five minutes more showed them the earlier and more modest houses; another five brought them to the "Corners," where the post office was filled with shirtwaist youths awaiting the afternoon mail. And now they drove slowly into the beautiful main avenue leading to the villas, the casino, the hotels, the dunes and the sea.

The hotel proprietor shone with joy. He remembered Mrs. Harding perfectly. She had spent two days there once. Why had she not wired? Perhaps Mrs. Sevenbanks expected them?

"On the contrary," said Mrs. Harding, "we shall surprise each other. I thought she had gone back to town. It was not she, my good Bailey, but your excellent hotel accommodations that drew me hither with my friends: Mr. and Mrs. Severino Gonzalez, Miss Mercedes Gonzalez, Miss Pacifica Gonzalez, Mr. Joseph Gonzalez and Mr. Roberto Vasquez. Also myself. You will please to register all these names, send us to the finest rooms, and soon, oh, very soon thereafter, summon us to a substantial repast. And it must be dinner. Do not mock us with the ambiguous fried potatoes—or, if they must be fried, see that they are French fried. We have appetites."

"*Que estd diciendo?*" murmured the elder Gonzalez girl, blushing as her eyes met those of the tall Vasquez.

"Leave it to her," said young Pepito, in their own tongue. "She is giving him *confites*; she has talent."

Then they all disappeared up stairs

in the wake of the proprietor to select their various quarters.

Mrs. Harding did not await the dinner bell. She made hasty change of toilette and reappeared in the wide drawing-room. The proprietor was attentive to her inquiries and explained that Mrs. Sevenbanks had gone for a long drive, probably to the Shinnecock Hills. She might not return until very late. She was stopping quite alone at the hotel; her niece had not been with her this season. It had been a good season thus far. He understood the heat in town was extreme. Mrs. Sevenbanks was looking much better than when she had arrived. The poor lady had seemed far from strong. Someone had mentioned to him—he begged pardon for alluding to it—that her niece had married rather unsatisfactorily. He hoped it was mere gossip. Mrs. Harding smiled discreetly. There was some truth in the story, she admitted; still, all marriages were guesses. Who could predict? One must always make the best of it. One could always travel—unless one were very poor. The best plan was to travel and avoid scandal.

The Gonzalez girls now came stealing down the stairs and ventured out on the piazza. "We shall no doubt like it," the elder observed. "There is a beautiful view."

"The tennis court is of more importance," said the younger, "as long as mamma makes golf so hard for us, thinking she must accompany us every moment, and getting so tired." She was darker, plainer and less good tempered than her sister, despite her name, Pacifica. "Provided," she went on, "there are any young men here."

"There is Vasquez," the elder suggested, timidly.

"Vasquez, indeed! Can a marble statue play golf? He knows nothing but books and laws."

"Very likely. Otherwise he would never have held such high offices. *Charge d'affaires*—"

"Of course, *Meches*, you adore him!"

"For heaven's sake, Chica! and I engaged to Gutierrez! What a temper!"

The bell rang in the dining hall with a great resonance, wholesomely cheerful. Footsteps and voices were heard.

XVI

MRS. HARDING had made herself as comfortable as she could in her room. The window shades were lifted and the great green slatted shutters half-drawn, so that one could see the tremendous moon rising late above the dunes. It was a still, sweet night; the scent of sea and of beach grasses came now and then like a delicate, ministering spirit. The boom of the ocean soothed her. She would have liked to doze, but that might not be, for she was expecting Mrs. Sevenbanks. The proprietor had informed her of that lady's return, and she had sent her card to her with a penciled "hoping for a few moments." She had drawn the red shade lower on the lamp, and just previous to ensconcing herself in one of the two large rocking-chairs, had set on the table a bottle with rich, red, sluggish contents. "A cordial," she had murmured, "for fear that quality may be lacking." Behind the bottle were two tiny glasses.

Would Mrs. Sevenbanks come? She yawned slightly. She would wait another half-hour, then, failing to—but at that instant there came the soft whisper of silken skirts, a delicate knock. "Enter!" she said, springing to her feet.

Mrs. Sevenbanks seemed to catch her breath faintly as she entered. "Ester Harding!" she cried, softly. She withdrew one of her hands from the other lady's clasp and pressed it to her side. She was dazzlingly pale of face, and, clad all in white, seemed wraith-like.

Mrs. Harding for the first time found her almost beautiful. "But you are looking very well," she exclaimed, drawing her nearer the

table and pressing her down into the other chair.

"I am better than I was," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, more steadily. "The sea air has given me strength. I was very bad."

"You were dreadfully pulled down, of course," responded Mrs. Harding. She was determined to have the painful part over as soon as possible. "It was a shock, I know—"

"Don't," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, faintly, again pressing her heart. "Please don't! I cannot endure—"

"But I am not going to say anything," the other persisted, "that is, anything that it would pain you to hear. Wait a bit. Let me pour you out a nutshell full of this curaçoa. It is fabulously good. A drop will stimulate if the heart is weak, as yours is." She filled the tiny glasses and pressed one into her sister-in-law's hand. "Drink," she urged, bravely setting the example.

Mrs. Sevenbanks, with a deep sigh, obeyed. They replaced the glasses on the table.

"That was a present to me," said Mrs. Harding. "I have a commoner kind for ordinary friends. I saved this for you to try."

"You are very kind," replied Mrs. Sevenbanks. The faintest wild rose pink was dawning in her cheeks. She seemed stronger and more capable of interest in her sister-in-law. "You brought a party of friends?" she presently inquired.

"Yes, the Gonzalez family and Mr. Vasquez. They were all very kind to me in Paris. And back in South America Vasquez was greatly attached to—Mr. Sylvester, as well as to my late husband."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Sevenbanks. "To my brother Francis? I should like to meet him—but then—"

"Do not worry. He knows about that unfortunate marriage—he will never allude to it. You see he was once—but that is seven or eight years ago—he was then the first sweetheart of our niece."

"Ester Harding! What are you saying?" And after a pause Mrs.

Sevenbanks, clasping her hands hard on her knee and bending forward, repeated, distressfully: "What are you saying?"

"I am saying the truth—no more or less. He is a fine fellow, a distinguished-looking man. You will say so when you see him."

"I saw two strange gentlemen this evening on the piazza. One was little and dark, the other tall and grave. Could they have been——?"

"The little man was Gonzalez, the tall one Vasquez."

"But they—the little man looked a Parisian, and the other——"

"Precisely. Well, my dear sister-in-law, that is the man who should have married our niece."

Mrs. Sevenbanks stared helplessly at the curaçoa bottle.

"I grieve to say he did not," went on the other lady presently. "And why? All for a childish jealousy. Someone had told the girl that he was in love with a married woman."

"Impossible!" said Mrs. Sevenbanks, with a start.

"Impossible for *him*, yes. Not impossible, perhaps, for some of his countrymen, for you know they are quite as fashionably up to date as some of our dear New Yorkers."

"His face impressed me as noble," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, thoughtfully. Then she drew a long breath. "But why," she murmured, "why have you brought these people here, the sight of whom can only remind me? You cannot mean to——"

"What could I mean? No, I thought you had gone back to town. But finding to the contrary, I was rather glad to think that I could present to you a countryman who was not absolutely a savage."

"Ester! Alas that it should be too late! Do not say any more. I have blamed myself enough. I was too uninformed—too prejudiced. If I had not insisted on the Clifford proposal . . . Perhaps you have heard how he married soon after—an impossible person whom he had long known and who can never be received."

Mrs. Harding spoke abruptly: "Have you seen Alma?"

Mrs. Sevenbanks gasped. "How could I? She has not come to me."

"You think she is well—and contented?"

"Heaven only knows. I had a letter from Mrs. Dow. Alice had seen her somewhere. They had not spoken. She looked well, Alice said."

"It would be like those Dows not to speak. A foolish precaution! That pattern of breeding, that raw-boned paragon of good form, will never find an earl to marry. She has not the money her cousin had—nor the beauty." She cleared her throat of its anger. Then, "I wrote Alma from Paris," she said, "six weeks ago. I asked her to come over there, but I got no answer. I was sure she would answer. Letters pass very quickly, and I was there until a fortnight ago."

"How did you know her address?"

"Why, I used the same old address, in care of your lawyer man."

"You mean her maiden name?"

"We Latins never renounce our fathers' honored names."

"Ah, to be sure," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, more gently. "But it is most likely she had no money."

"Oh, yes, she had," said Mrs. Harding, positively. There was silence for a time, then she inquired, "You are here alone—not even a maid?"

"I feared to bring Nora; she would gossip. And Jane is simply worthless away from town. I suppose she must marry James—eventually. There is a neat young chambermaid here who does all I require. It is understood, and the proprietor has no objection to my paying her. I could spare her if you should need——"

"Many thanks, but I am well used to waiting on myself. Now you must take just a tiny sip of this—" She refilled the glasses. "It revives you. I was amazed at what a scientific man told me of its properties. You have already some color in your face. If you knew how young it makes you look——"

Mrs. Sevenbanks smiled faintly. "You will have your jest, Ester." But she took the cordial. "It is late," she said, rising; "I must retire. I had such a long drive! We will talk more in the morning. Regrets are the most futile things. Still, if only I had not insisted on the Clifford proposal!" The curaçoa had made her more communicative. "And now—now there is no remedy—" She reached out and caught the hands of her sister-in-law. "There is no remedy, Ester? I suppose none?" Her eyes searched the other's countenance almost feverishly.

Mrs. Harding shook her head. "How can I tell? One thing, I am unalterably opposed to divorce," she said, with strong emphasis. "It is so much more honorable to travel—so much more in accordance with a lofty character." She followed the other to the door. "I will see you again in the morning. I have another bottle of that cordial, which I am going to give you. It will do you a world of good. Just the two bottles were presented me, and I have saved the other, knowing you were not strong. Till to-morrow; and remember—" she lowered her voice—"I am unalterably opposed to divorce. Anything else—"

"Good-night," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, floating away like a snow wraith into the dimness of the passage.

XVII

ON the night following that on which Alma's anxious aunts had sat speaking of her in that upper chamber of the seaside hotel Alma herself sat alone at her window in Madison avenue. She had been alone in the apartment for over twenty-four hours. Da Veiga, since going out with the fifty dollars in his pocket the previous afternoon, had omitted to return. She felt sure now that he had gone to the Twenty-fourth street house, and that the woman Barbara had kept him there. She had waited patiently all day for some message, never once leaving the building. She

hardly knew whether she had eaten anything or not. There were biscuits, cheese and plenty of coffee in the house, but she had not felt hungry. Probably she had eaten and drunk mechanically. It was now approaching ten o'clock, and she began to think it would be well to seek rest. She was worn out, and her thoughts seemed at times to drift uncontrollably, like débris on some high Spring flood. A crisis had come into her life, she knew, and she was powerless to avert it.

Lingering yet a little by the window, she could see distinctly in the white moonlight on the street below the few pedestrians that passed. At last, just as she was about to turn away, she caught sight of a familiar figure turning the corner into the avenue. It was da Veiga, finally returning.

She remained there, watching his approach. He came deliberately, at peace, it seemed, with all the world. She moved slightly back from the window as he crossed to the house entrance, but even as she did so her gaze fell on another figure turning the corner into the avenue—the figure of a woman. It was impossible for her to mistake, in that intense white light, the hesitation, the stealthy half-pause, the redetermination of the woman Barbara! She was following him home!

To what end? For what purpose? Did he suspect? Was it by some arrangement with him that she followed? Was he going out to meet her again? Did he think Alma might have gone away? Was it an understanding between them to pretend some amicable settlement and separation? Was it—money? A thousand fancies framed themselves to distract her in the few seconds of actual time.

She saw the woman linger on the opposite side, then hastily cross over in his tracks. A sudden suffocating terror came on her. To escape from them—night and all—to escape. Her hat—her purse in her bosom—to escape! The elevator was coming up

—she had but seconds. Her hat—she caught it—then she heard his key in the door. Between the drawing-room and its alcove were abundant satin portières that had been drawn back to the utmost during the hot weather. Into the folds of these she crept and stood motionless. She heard da Veiga enter, breathing wearily. “I ‘ave walk fast,” he said, in English. “No one ‘ere? Oh, *mi querida!*!” Then, in Spanish, “She has gone, as I expected. Well—she will come back.” He retraced his way down the passage to the dining-room, where the gas burned dimly. His next act, she thought, would be to make coffee and drink it. She waited to hear the clatter of the gas range, during which she might pass out and close the door after her without being heard. But she seemed to wait in vain. He was perhaps changing his coat or continuing to seek for her. Still she waited. Suddenly she started at hearing the bell of the apartment door ring quietly, steadily. Could it be—?

She heard him coming from the remote kitchen. “So—she ‘as come back,” he said. “I did know. Well, *mi queri*—” He had opened the door and stood facing—someone very different. “You!” he cried, with hysterical shrillness. “Why you did come to this ‘ouse? Now, so I prove to you there is no woman—in every room I lead you. You make my to kill you yet, if so you think those things, Bébé!” The door closed heavily. The two were in the private passage. And Alma stifled in the heavy satin portières.

“Have you killed *her* yet?” the woman questioned, in a low, sarcastic tone. “No, Rufino da Veiga, the time has come when you must choose. I am tired of your promises and your falsehoods. I am tired of trusting you. The end is going to be right now, or—well, I shall make an end. You needn’t look scared; I don’t mean murder—or suicide. No, nothing of the sort. I mean to—expose you!”

There was an instant of breath-

less silence, then the sound of a low chuckle. “Oh, Bébé, what foolish woman! ‘Ow you can expose? What I ‘ave done? I kill no one—I do no ‘arm—”

“No, Rufino, you didn’t kill the old Count. But when he died you stole his papers—stole his title—stole the few things he had about him. You may claim he gave them to you, as you were his trusted servant. But all he ever *gave* you, Rufino, was that scar on the face, where he struck you for being too fond of his housekeeper. He had a fiery temper, the old Count. You see, I know everything, Rufino. You didn’t think I knew so much? I found a letter and I paid to have it translated. That was easily done. I have the letter still, not where you can ever get it—not in Twenty-fourth street. And I have sent a copy to a man who has a friend who is from South America and is a lawyer. And this lawyer will be in New York in a few days. Then, Rufino, if you have not made an end of this business, you will be exposed. And I—I shall turn you into the street.”

Da Veiga laughed aloud. “You are one foolish woman, Bébé. You think to scare my. Poor Bébé! Who will believe one crazy woman? I will say, ‘It is because I will not give ‘er money.’ The judge will say, ‘She is one blackmailer.’ Eh, Bébé?”

“The rich family of your heiress will not say so. Just one word to them and they will do all the rest. Just one word only I need to say. I tell them that the man who played the Count Geraldina, the millionaire concessionary, is an impostor. The real Count is dead. I say to them, ‘The man you know, the tall, fine-looking man, the bronzed general, the refugee, the revolutionist, was only an employé of the late Count. He was the late Count’s courier and—*valet!*’”

There was the sound of husky, hard breathing. Was the heart excitement purely her own, Alma wondered, or did she hear the labored respirations of the two strange beings in the passage?

"Vare well, Bébé," said da Veiga, presently, in a resigned way. "I see you are one *diablo*. What you will 'ave I do? I go back with you to Twenty-fourth street. I get my 'at and coat. I leave the gas turned low. I go with you."

XVIII

WHEN Alma was blocks away from the house she regretted that she had not taken a small handbag. She feared no hotel would admit her at that hour. She was well aware that night clerks suspected all unattended women of suicidal intentions. She had no idea what she was going to do for shelter. She must get away from that terrible apartment before she could think or determine. Walking aimlessly for nearly an hour, all at once she discovered herself within a square of her old home, the town house of her aunt, Mrs. Sevenbanks. She remembered there were always a couple of servants there throughout the Summer. It was nearly midnight, but owing to the sultry heat the housekeeper or the butler might be awake. They could offer no objection to her remaining for the night. At all events, she would make the attempt. The idea came like a ray of crystal clearness through the darkness of all other thoughts.

She succeeded in wakening them even more easily than she had anticipated. The housekeeper came to the area door dressed and actually smiling. There was no surprise in her manner. "Oh, it is you, Miss Alma."

"Yes, it is I, Josephine. You did not expect me at this hour?"

The answer came in somewhat startling form: "The telegram was not so clear, miss; it didn't say whether to-day or to-morrow. It only said: 'Prepare rooms at once for Mrs. Harding.' We thought best to wait up till twelve."

For the briefest instant Alma stood motionless. Then: "I find it a little dim here," she said, slowly;

"the moonlight dazzles." She followed the woman in. "It was wise to wait up, Josephine," she said, recovering herself after a few seconds. "And at what time did you receive the despatch?"

"It was about noon, miss. You will find it in the dressing-room. We prepared the chamber that Mrs. Harding always occupies."

"That was right. The dressing-room with the little bed will do for me. Mrs. Harding may not arrive until morning. I will go up at once, Josephine. The lights are on in the hall, I suppose."

"The electric, yes, miss. Shall I go with you?"

"You may, please, and—get me the telegram." She said to herself if this were all a dream she would waken when she came to reach for the yellow form. But no wakening came. The telegram was dated at the Beach that very morning. "Prepare rooms at once for Mrs. Harding," it said, and the signature was "L. S. Sevenbanks," exactly as her Aunt Louise was in the habit of signing when writing or wiring to her servants.

The housekeeper lingered a little. "It is a pleasure to see you again, Miss Alma," she ventured. "Can I do anything for you? Would you desire a bath prepared?"

"Thank you, Josephine, I require nothing. I am going to bed at once. The little bed in the dressing-room—I am tired—I shall want coffee rather early—before nine, I think. I will ring for you to send it up. I suppose James is still here? Yes? Good-night, Josephine."

"Good-night, Miss Alma."

Alma was alone in her old home.

She sat down on the divan at the foot of the great carved bed in the larger room. "Aunt Ester coming here to-morrow! Aunt Ester not in Paris, but at the Beach—and her letter only two days in my hands! What can I say to her? What will she say to me?" All at once she sprang up and locked herself in, then began to undress with a sort of fren-

zied haste. She would get into bed before anything should happen to alter matters. With her reëntry into this conventional and stately home she felt herself suddenly restored to the conventional mental condition of her girlhood days—a helpless, ultra-womanly condition. Up to the moment of entering she could have walked the streets till morning, gone about fearless and uncaring. Now she felt that rather than step from the house to the pavement she would seek means of suicide. There was as much terror and horror for her at the thought of being out unprotected in the night as she would have felt in the months of early Spring, before she ever saw da Veiga. If they should ask her to leave, or coldly thrust her out, she would fall dying on the stones of the sidewalk, it seemed to her. Surely they would not molest her if they found she had retired. With these wild and foolish forebodings she cowered under the linen sheet and straightway fell into the deep oblivion of exhaustion.

She knew nothing more till roused by a loud knocking. She sat up in bed and looked round her uncomprehendingly. It was another day. She was there, it was no dream. A familiar voice was calling her name:

“Alma, open quickly! It is I—” the voice of her Aunt Ester.

“Yes,” she was able to make husky answer, as she slipped from the bed and stood a moment on the Persian rug. Her glance fell on a bath robe folded neatly on a chair. She caught it up, wrapped it about her and opened the door.

Mrs. Harding reached out and embraced her lightly. “So glad, my dear! You got here first, it seems.” She pushed her gently back into the room, and turning, spoke to the housekeeper in the hall. “Josephine, do me the kind favor to go down and personally superintend the making of that coffee, else it will be too weak. You always know just what I want. In ten or fifteen minutes will be soon enough. Thank you, Josephine, that is all.” She closed the door behind

her. “Heaven be praised, my child,” she said.

Alma had receded to the bed. Her lips moved, but her throat was constricted. Ester Harding watched her with sympathetic eyes. “There,” she said, “don’t look so white; all will come right. It was to find you I came. I thought it would be harder.”

Alma sank on the bed. “To find me?” The words came unsteadily. “Aunt Ester, I am lost. You—you do not know. He—he is an impostor. He is no count—he was only—the Count’s—valet!” She fell to shaking like one with a chill.

Ester Harding breathed deeply. Then: “Heaven again be praised!” she cried. “I find my task half-done—I do not have to break the news to you.”

“You don’t understand—you don’t know, Aunt Ester—”

“I know all. It is why I am here. I came from Paris. I wrote you and you did not answer—”

“I only got your letter the day before yesterday.”

“As you did not answer I had to come. And it is better so. All will soon come right.”

“Aunt Ester, you have not understood me yet. He was not the Count, but—”

“That is what I had come to tell you, and I must say I did not enjoy the task in prospect. But all this is why I am down at the Beach with a party of six on my hands. Yes, my dear, I had to bring the entire blessed Gonzalez family from Paris. They are down there as my guests. It costs me something, but what of that? I had to bring Severino Gonzalez—he knew the real Count. It was he, besides, who wrote the letter of introduction for the real Count—the letter whose date was altered. Naturally, Severino could not leave his wife behind, nor could she leave her daughters unchaperoned. As for Pepito, he amuses me.”

“Pepito?” murmured Alma, still shivering.

“That is young Gonzalez. Why do you tremble so, child? Dress

yourself, partly at least. After our good strong coffee you can tell me what you will. Above all, not a word for the servants to catch and repeat; I faithfully promised this to your Aunt Sevenbanks."

"My Aunt Sevenbanks," murmured Alma, desolately. "She can never forgive me."

"It is herself that she is inclined not to forgive. She considers it entirely her own fault. If you could hear her! She blames herself for having approved the old widower, what was his name? She does not like him so well now. It seems he married someone that he had known a long time. I never before knew that could prove an objection—it seems his wife will not be received on that account. Your aunt was quite shaken. How happy she will be to have you back again!"

"She did not say I had disgraced her?" the girl faltered.

"*Hija!* That is something only people of low extraction are capable of, speaking against their own flesh and blood—particularly their children. Do not insult her with such a thought. But dress yourself. I am going to telegraph for your Aunt Sevenbanks to come at once."

XIX

AFTER sending the telegram they had time to sit talking matters over. For the third time Alma asked her aunt how she had worded the message, and for the third time Ester Harding repeated, patiently: "'If possible, come up to town at once. Alma is here to remain. All well and serene.'" There were seven extra words, she clearly remembered.

A heavy shower fell in the early afternoon and made the air a little less oppressive. They remained for the most part in the chamber that had been specially opened for the Spanish lady. The drawing-rooms and other suites were of course closed. All the heavy green shades of the windows were down, and they

found it dim and restful as the rain began.

Mrs. Harding had not pressed the girl to recite her experiences, and of these Alma spoke but little beyond that part beginning with the appearance of the woman Barbara on the scene. The elder lady seemed at times desirous to avert a tragic aspect. She made her niece describe the woman. "A large, long nose, you say," she commented. "A very large nose, like Cyrano de Bergerac's or just a generous nose, 'the nose of a woman who would always have money in the bank' Where did I hear that?" She even tried to smile over incidents. "Let us keep as cheerful as we can, my dear," she said. "It may seem dark for a while, but we shall get over it." Now and then she would try to divert with irrelevant remarks: "Strange these New York houses cannot be kept cooler. One does not suffer so indoors in the tropics. If all the draperies could be sent away—that rug in the dressing-room smells hot."

"The Bokhara prayer-rug," said Alma, feebly. "Aunt Louise thought it a bargain at two hundred and fifty dollars."

"A cold weather bargain. The rain seems to cease. I hope it will be cooler by seven if she comes on the four o'clock train."

Alma moved uneasily in her chair. She seemed nervously for something. After a great effort she managed to ask: "Aunt Ester, how much does Aunt Louise know?"

"By this time, probably more than we do. It makes no difference. The main thing is that you are here, safe."

"She will never let me stay here."

"That is nonsense, my dear. In the first place, she knows she was to blame—has acknowledged it to me. Why did she not cable me? No, she waited and wrote. Poor soul, she regrets waiting now. I was in Paris; the Gonzalez family was there. I knew nothing of what you had done when, one day, as was natural, I asked Severino something about the letter he had sent by the Count. He

had forgotten about it. 'Strange,' I said, 'very strange.'

"One forgets a good deal in a year," he apologized.

"How in a year?"

"Why, the Count is dead more than a year."

"The Count is dead?" I repeated. 'Did I not leave him in New York, very much alive—very stout and healthy?'

"Of whom are you talking?" he asked, bewildered.

"Of Geraldina, of course."

"I tell you he is dead—over a year."

"You did not recently send him to me with a letter of introduction?"

"Why, I did give him a letter some weeks before he died."

"Well, he has, then, come to life again. He is over in New York."

"You mistake. What sort of a man is this you speak of, *señora*?"

"A tall, large man—part Indian. If he were not so tanned he would be called fine looking."

"Geraldina was little and crippled from a bullet in the thigh," he said.

"Who, then, presented to me your letter? Who is this man?" I asked.

Severino reflected. 'It may have been that someone stole the letter after the death of Geraldina.'

"But who would have access to his effects?"

"Some friend or dependent, perhaps."

Pepito, Severino's son, who sat listening as we talked, spoke up. 'You would like to see a picture of the Count, *señora*? I took one a few weeks before he died, with my large camera. It is in my collection. I will get it.' He was gone not five minutes and came back with his hands full of prints. 'Here,' he said, 'is one of the Count, alone.' I looked and saw a thin-faced, shrunken cripple leaning on a cane. 'And here—' he began to laugh—'here is a snapshot of the Count when his valet was carrying him aboard the yacht of Mr. Brown, the rich American. And they were together so heavy that the din-

gey capsized and they fell in the water. Oh, the valet was strong, but—'

"I looked and saw two figures, one carrying the other. 'Who is the large man?' I inquired.

"Why, the valet," said Pepito.

"It was he," I said to Severino, 'who brought me the letter of introduction and was presented by me to my sister-in-law, Mrs. Sevenbanks.'

Severino was silent for some seconds. Then he said, shrugging a little: 'Señora, I am sincerely sorry, but—no Yankee woman is ever long imposed on.'

"Soon after, we received the news of what you had done."

Alma uttered a groan. "What will become of me? She will never forgive me," she reiterated.

"She has already forgiven you," said Ester Harding, "and—if you don't go on living here, you might travel. It seems to me, in such a case, it is good taste to travel awhile."

"I am too poor to travel," said Alma, "and too—unhappy." She continued, after an instant, unsteadily: "Besides, there must be some kind of separation."

"That we shall come to later on. Nothing in too much haste. We shall have good legal advice to adjust your status."

"I wish," said the girl, suddenly, "I could go far away from New York forever—and forget it all."

"We shall see."

"Aunt Louise did not say what she thought should be done?"

"I gave her no time to consider. I started out by saying, 'I am unalterably opposed to divorce.'"

"But, Aunt Ester, you wouldn't leave me tied to that man—an impostor—another woman's husband in the sight of heaven—a valet—?"

"My dear, I had to take a stand. We are going to see about it. You must remember several things. First, the 'sight of heaven,' with all due reverence, plays no great part in matrimony. If it did, gracious hosts, what an upsettal of things! It is the

sight of the *law* that counts. Then, the strict, religious principles of your Aunt Sevenbanks, a devout church woman. No toleration of divorce. The good bishops and clergy——"

"The bishops and clergy don't have to live with valets," cried Alma, wildly.

"H'sh! I know. Between you and me, they might cultivate a few more scruples about marrying unsuitable couples. But one must take a very moral stand and at the same time endeavor to be diplomatic. Without diplomacy the world would again become chaotic. I remember while we were crossing from Havre to New York I was lying flat on my back in the berth, not sick at all, but wishing to spare myself the grief of seeing the excellent Gonzalez folk suffer. A little rhyme came running through my head that seemed to point a moral and a course. I don't recall the Spanish words, but this is the way it would go in English:

"See a little pig sunning in the yard;
Would you have it come to you, hit it
good and hard.
Would you have it run away, this is of
avail:
Plant your feet and drag it backward by
its curly tail."

She paused, but Alma, with her face bowed in her hands, only breathed heavily.

A slight commotion was audible in the hall or on the landing below. Mrs. Harding went out and spoke over the baluster:

"Josephine, you have received a telegram?"

"Yes, madam. Mrs. Sevenbanks will arrive this evening. We are preparing her apartment."

XX

At the sound of cab wheels grinding up close to the curbstone—Mrs. Sevenbanks had really chosen a cheap little cab to drive her from the ferry—a wave of nervous terror seemed to inundate the entire chamber. Alma sat drowned and speechless; Ester Hard-

ing flew to the window, tried to peep out and returned quickly to her chair. One of her small Spanish feet tapped the floor as ceaselessly as if connected with an electric battery. Once she turned her head slightly to see that the maid had not taken away her second bottle of sacred curaçoa, which she had promised to Mrs. Sevenbanks and meant presently to bring to good use if necessary.

"I wish I didn't shake so," said Alma.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Ester Harding; "what in the world is there to shake about?" and she moved forward in her chair and made a desperate effort to keep her foot still. The door leading to the wide landing was open. They could hear Mrs. Sevenbanks speaking mildly to the house-keeper: "All are well, I trust. You have ordered dinner for eight o'clock, as usual? You may take the things out of the bag. No, do not send Jane. I shall not dress for dinner. I am going up to Mrs. Harding."

Ester Harding rose as her sister-in-law entered. It seemed to her Mrs. Sevenbanks was looking unusually young. The heat of the day had flushed the lady's cheeks. She wore a tailored costume of finest green-gray cloth, as thin of texture as the silken peachblow lining. Her small hat was a marvel of good taste and her fair hair shone pale golden.

"Can it be she 'regenerates' it?" Ester asked herself. "She keeps herself slender. The secret of youth is never to get fat under the chin." And even while thus reflecting she was giving the lady a slight handshake and smile. "You must be tired. Do sit down here. As you see, our truant has come home. I am sure we shall all soon be happy again."

Alma, on the other hand, had not been able to rise to greet her aunt. She sat steeped in wretchedness and her head dropped on her breast.

Mrs. Sevenbanks sighed softly but distinctly and sat down. "I am a little tired," she said. "You are looking thin, Alma."

Alma lifted her head. She found she could speak and must speak. She began with some directness: "Aunt Louise, I know that I acted badly toward you, and I am sincerely sorry. I hope you will pardon me. I have been punished enough, and my only desire now is to leave New York—go away where I shall not be any further trouble to you. I know you will always be reminded of my rashness and the mistake I made. Still, if I had married Mr. Clifford I should have made one just as bad, or worse. For even before he spoke to you about proposing to me I knew things about his way of life. I never dared to speak to you about it, for you would have thought it shocking for a young girl to know such things, and you would have been vexed. It was Alice Dow who first told me, and everyone considered her so sensible. She told me how Mr. Clifford knew this same woman that he has finally married even before his first marriage, and how he went back to her after each marriage, not always waiting for his wife to die, either—went back to her, as he said, for 'comfort in disillusionment.' And how each time she took him back as patiently as she had given him up previously. And besides, how there was a child. Yes, I knew all this from Alice Dow, and how could I think of marrying such a man?" She paused, breathing fast after this flow of words.

"I knew nothing of these stories," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, with a slight chill of tone. "I am greatly astonished at Miss Dow." It was the first time she had ever called Alice "Miss Dow."

Ester Harding now thought it her turn to speak. "Well," she said, cheerily, "all's well that is going to end well. I have been saying to Alma that should you approve she might travel for a time."

Mrs. Sevenbanks cleared her throat. "Ycs," she agreed, slowly, "I have decided upon this plan. Arrangements will be begun at once for a trip. I must explain to you that not long after you had left the Beach this

morning the mail was brought up and Señor Roberto found a communication that brought him quickly to speak with me. Documents had been forwarded to him bearing on this very case, including letters that will have due effect. In the course of our serious and careful conversation he gave me his opinion that Alma should speedily seek legal separation. We then decided that the best course would be to start at once for Dakota, establish a residence there and engage the best counsel."

Ester Harding looked a little astonished. "From whom could he have received the documents?" she asked, doubtfully.

"From an American friend who is also a lawyer in this city, and who in sending them was acting in the interest of a person—a woman who makes some claim," Mrs. Sevenbanks concluded, rather haughtily.

"Bébé," Alma murmured, faintly. She was wondering who this Señor Roberto might be. One of her Aunt Ester's South American friends, no doubt. The die was cast, it seemed. She was to go to Dakota.

After a moment Mrs. Sevenbanks continued: "It will be necessary, of course, for one or both of us to accompany Alma. The preparations can be made in a few days. I do not think I shall return to the Beach, though perhaps it may be necessary for you to do so in order to look after your friends." She smiled faintly. "The young ladies appear devoted to golf, but as near as I can understand, object to their mamma acting as caddy."

"They may all have to go to Dakota as witnesses," said Mrs. Harding, taking a cobweb handkerchief from her sleeve and fanning herself with it in a desperate way. "It is getting colossal."

"I hardly think it will be necessary. Depositions can be taken. We must endeavor to eliminate all unnecessary features, if you will permit me to say so, my dear Ester."

The Spanish lady reflected in silence. "Why didn't he come up to

town with you?" she exclaimed, after a moment.

"To whom do you refer? Señor Roberto? I was about to tell you that he did come up with me. He has gone to his hotel."

"Good! I will send for him to come here after dinner."

"It is some friend of yours, Aunt Ester, this Señor Roberto?" Alma inquired, rousing a little.

"My dear, why of course. I have not had time to mention it. An old friend of ours, whom your dear father knew."

Mrs. Sevenbanks glanced at her sister-in-law in surprise. "Had you not told her?" she asked, speaking with far more mildness than before; "had you not told her of our reliance on Don Vasquez?"

XXI

NATURALLY Ester Harding did not carry out her plan of sending for Señor Vasquez after dinner. For one reason, Alma's sudden fainting spell—due entirely, as both elder ladies agreed, to the intense heat—had alarmed them, although on recovering she had insisted on going down to dine with them and had actually taken a few spoonfuls of bouillon. The drawing-rooms, dismantled and swathed in Summer linens, afforded them no place of repose, and they were obliged to return after dinner to the upper stories. Alma continued on up, saying she wished to lie down and rest, while her aunts paused to converse in Mrs. Sevenbanks's boudoir.

Mrs. Sevenbanks sighed as she took a seat near the window. "It seems strange to be here at this time," she said. "I have often regretted that I ever let my country house. It was a serious mistake. Yet at the time it seemed foolish to maintain that expensive establishment for one weary old woman like myself and a girl of as simple and democratic tastes as Alma. It seemed especially foolish when those Western people were so anxious to take it at any price." She sighed

again. "I might have asked them double the sum. Living is so costly nowadays. Enormous taxes devour one. I would not be sorry to sell this house. There were conditions in the will, but they might be met. I should try to find a modest little home somewhere out on the Riverside Drive."

"You would have to build it," said Ester, practically. "There is nothing there but palaces and apartment hotels. Taxes you would never survive. I wonder what we should do if these single tax lunatics ever got control. In some tropical countries there is no land tax. It is paradise. The poorest peasant tills his own ground and doesn't ask you for alms. Ask Señor Vasquez."

Mrs. Sevenbanks coughed slightly. "Do you think—" she lowered her voice—"it was the mention of his name—you know—"

"That shocked her into fainting? I hope not. Still, you see the 'Don' doesn't go with the surname."

"I dare say I make painful blunders," Mrs. Sevenbanks acquiesced, with meek sarcasm.

"Not at all. But about this trip to Dakota? I wish it were over and the matter settled."

"I thought," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, with sudden recollection, "that you were unalterably opposed to divorce."

"So I am! so I am!" cried Ester, quickly. "Theoretically at least. But if it comes to one's own flesh and blood being linked to a horrid impostor—a valet! Don Roberto broke it to you gently, I know. A valet! it is more than human nature can endure." She rose. "I think," she said, "I ought to go up and persuade Alma to retire. There is always danger of a low fever following on such mental strain. To-morrow we must consult Vasquez, and whenever you wish I am ready to follow implicitly your instructions and accompany you with the poor girl to the West. Rely on me, Louise, I beg of you. No matter how painful the duty, rely on me to fulfil it."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Seven-

banks, calmly. "Then if you are going up to Alma will you kindly ring for Jane for me? The bell is by the door. Thank you again, dear Ester. Good-night, since you must go."

Alma was already in bed, with the cool linen sheet drawn close to her chin. "I am not asleep," she said, as Ester sat down beside her, and after a moment's pause, "Don't let me have to see Vasquez! I couldn't bear it."

"No, of course not. It isn't necessary at all; it is really surprising what a fancy your Aunt Louise has taken to him. I always think what a pity it is that things always happen too late. Well, of course he can be of great use to us—as a friend, nothing more. We must let him be a friend; it is only a fair apology on our part for your ever having misjudged him as you did, thinking him in love with that woman, when it was really Prudencio—surely you remember Don Prudencio, his great friend, with the invalid wife? The wife died; so did the superfluous husband; then Prudencio married the lady."

"Don Prudencio," Alma repeated, huskily. "Was it really he—not Vasquez? Well—it can't matter now. He would never look at me. I shall be only an unfortunate divorced woman, who married a valet."

Mrs. Harding got up and closed the door softly. "My dear, there are worse things. This is a republic, remember, where all men are equal. A valet might be as good as anyone else, and his wife a good deal better. Anyway," she continued, rather inconsistently, "once you are out of it you will be surprised how quickly people forget. Especially if you should marry again. But there is no need for worry. I have an idea we shall start to-morrow or the next day for the West. I hope so, for it must be cooler out there. To-morrow I have to devise a way to get your clothes from that apartment."

"Oh, yes, my clothes," said Alma. "I suppose I shall need them."

"Well, one can't do very well without garments. I see your arms are bare. Didn't Josephine lay out a nightgown for you? I must ring. Surely in a civilized house one can always command a *robe de nuit*."

XXII

MRS. HARDING was the first to alight from the closed carriage as it drew up before the station. The town was still enwrapped in sultriness, but Ester was not one to complain of mere atmosphere when more important matters were pressing. They had been busy for the past forty-eight hours. Fortunately there had been less difficulty than she had anticipated in getting Alma's things from the Madison avenue apartment. When the confidential messenger despatched thither to reconnoiter came back with word of the dispossess notice tacked on the door Ester had promptly summoned an expressman and given him orders; then possessed herself of Alma's key and proceeded in person to the spot to pack up whatever she should recognize as her niece's. "The fox is the best messenger," she quoted aloud. She felt now a complacent delight in the belief that she had left no souvenir for the redoubtable da Veiga to exult over. She had been forced to admit to herself that the rascal had excellent taste in furniture and decorations. She had particularly admired the piano stool—a giant iron mushroom with smaller mushrooms at the base, all in the richest mushroom-hued velvet. She had felt a new sympathy for her niece after getting the trunks packed and carted away. What superb audacity, that of the bogus Geraldina!

After Mrs. Harding came Mrs. Sevenbanks, pale and preoccupied, then the girl herself. All were in quiet traveling attire and seemed anxious to escape attention. Mrs. Harding hastily sent the carriage away and followed the others into the waiting-room.

"I see nothing of Jane," said Mrs. Sevenbanks, irritably, as she gazed about.

"Jane is probably weeping good-bye on the butler's shoulder," Mrs. Harding answered.

"But she had orders to be here with the bags and umbrellas long ahead of us."

"I will leave you and Alma and go through the other rooms. She may be in the New Haven division." And Mrs. Harding disappeared. She returned in a few moments unsuccessful. "I see Vasquez outside, however, getting out of a hansom," she remarked.

Mrs. Sevenbanks sighed faintly. "Ah! he promised to see us off." At this Alma sank down limp and quiet between the iron arm supports of the waiting-room bench, while Mrs. Harding hastened over to the door and met the gentleman coming in. Mrs. Sevenbanks waited patiently, not even putting up her glass, but the girl's keen eyes could see distinctly the face and figure of this friend of days gone by. He had not changed at all; men stay the same, year after year, while women grow old and hideous betimes, she thought. She felt very old and drawn at this moment. She hoped her Aunt Ester would keep him down there at the door. He had the same grave expression of perfect features, the same way of lifting his hat, the same walk. He was coming toward them just as he had come toward her that last evening—what an age of years ago!—in the tropical sunset, down the long lane that led to the *potrero*. It was at the end of the dry season—the grass was brittle as hay on the *potrero* slopes; so dry and slippery that one could have coasted down hill on a wooden-runnered sled to the crystal brooklet at the base. The scent of orange and lemon trees was heavy. He came in at the gate from the road. It was her father's suburban villa on the hill above the town. She had a white rose in her hair—one of the thousand roses that bloomed perpetually on the great climbing rose tree

over the adobe wall before the house. . . .

The voice of her Aunt Sevenbanks recalled her. She came back with a pang to the present. "What can they be discussing?" the elder lady inquired, impatiently, at last, and started toward them.

"There is a mistake," said Mrs. Harding; "Don Roberto tells me we were misinformed, and we have nearly an hour to wait for our train."

Mrs. Sevenbanks was annoyed. Insufficient time to return home and over-sufficient for remaining in such a place, she commented. Mrs. Harding coincided, but there was no help for it. She undertook to explain to Vasquez how there was a new waiting-room being built that should be magnificent in white and gold. "Which is no great comfort at the present moment," Mrs. Sevenbanks put in, drily.

While speaking they were all unconsciously moving toward Alma. "That accounts, then, for Jane's tardiness," said Mrs. Harding. "The butler knew the time-table better than we." Mrs. Sevenbanks now be-thought herself that she would like to find a long-distance telephone and give some instructions to the hotel man at the Beach about her luggage left there. Vasquez wished to be permitted to accompany her to the booth, but she begged him to do her the greater favor of remaining with the others. She would feel more at ease. There was some apprehension in her mind, she hardly could explain what caused it. She wished they were aboard. She floated gently toward the door and vanished. Vasquez stood gazing at Mrs. Harding; both seemed embarrassed. Could he remain there without saluting the third lady of the party? Suddenly Ester gave a little cry: "Oh, Louise has forgotten! I must run after her. Please stay here, Don Roberto. I will come right back." And she, too, was gone. Vasquez took a step forward. There was no other way. Alma, seeing this, rose and put out her hand. She was able to speak composedly. "I have not yet been

able to thank you—for all your kindness. My aunt has told me—of your thoughtfulness—" Her voice failed.

"I know that you have been ill," he answered, hastily. "It is better to sit down again, isn't it? The heat—"

"I think I should rather walk," she replied. "I shall have to sit so much on the long journey."

"It is a long journey," he acquiesced, gravely. They passed down the room. "The last time I saw you," he said, presently—"it must be nearly seven years ago. The evening before you left the villa to return to town, I think."

"Yes. I was recalling it a moment ago, sitting there," said Alma, dully. "I remember it all. We walked in the lane. No doubt you have long since forgotten. . . . I said things . . . I was under a wrong impression. I misjudged you. You didn't know the reason—you only thought me ill-natured and jealous. I did you a great wrong, it seems. I can only ask you to pardon me now . . . now when I am in trouble—and disgraced—" Her voice broke at last.

"Don't grieve," he said, gently; "don't grieve. I, too—you cannot believe I had forgotten anything. That last walk—the rose in your hair—the swift sunset and the soft dusk before the stars. . . . When you left me in anger the rose fell out of your hair—I have it yet. Some men—remember." They had reached the end of the waiting-room and had to turn abruptly.

"I see my Aunt Ester coming back. She has found Jane, it seems. Let us go to them."

Thus the reconciliation.

Mrs. Harding had much to say to the maid, whose eyes were quite red. "But yes, Jane. The idea of crying! Of course, it shows your good heart not to want to leave your old grandmother, but think of the nice journey and all the sights. To-morrow we shall be in Chicago, where there are lakes and things. You can mail all the letters you will have written on

the train—to Josephine and Nora and—your grandmother. Then it's only three months, and when you come back—handsome Christmas presents."

Never had Ester Harding been so loquacious with a servant. But Alma and Vasquez stood close to her in silence. Their duet was over. Had they been alone they could not have spoken. There was something between them like a great blur that obscured all things and deadened the soul—something that must be obliterated, wiped away forever.

The moments wore on toward train time. The gateman opened the door and took his place. The guards began to call out the through express for the West. "We could go aboard if only Louise would come," said Mrs. Harding. "She has all the tickets." The three moved uneasily. Time was passing. "Here she comes," cried Ester, suddenly. Mrs. Sevenbanks came hurrying along. Her face was pale with terror.

"He is out there," she gasped to her sister-in-law. "Da Veiga—following us!" All heard her words.

"Quick—the tickets, please!" cried Vasquez, sharply. "Follow me—we must get aboard!"

XXIII

How he succeeded Vasquez afterward never quite remembered. A generous fee enlisted the services of the colored porter, and the three ladies and the maid were speedily concealed in the curtains of their adjoining sections. Vasquez breathed freer when they were out of sight. Their frightened faces had been painful. He conversed with them in low tones for a time, then bade them good-bye. Ester recalled him for an instant; would he not look carefully about the station to see . . .

He started again. But in the vestibule he found his passage blocked by a large figure. He had studied Pepito Gonzalez's blue prints too well to be mistaken. This was really the bogus Count pursuing them. How had he passed the gates?

The two men stood gazing at each other. Then slowly and quietly Vasquez receded. He backed through the passage into the car aisle. Could he warn them? Da Veiga spared him the trouble.

"You did bring with you in this car my wife?" His accusation was so aggressively audible that other passengers arriving or already ensconced turned quickly or thrust out curious heads.

But Vasquez regarded him with unmoved features. "You were speaking to me, sir?" he inquired, indifferently.

"I say you did bring 'ere my wife!" da Veiga insisted, more loudly.

"You mistake, sir. Do me the favor to pass on."

There was silence in the car; everyone was listening. As the porter came hurrying through with a belated traveler's bag and a "'Scuse me, sah, jes' wanter set this down," da Veiga appealed furiously to him. "This man 'e 'ave rob my wife!" he shouted.

Vasquez, with his back to the curtains behind which Mrs. Harding and Alma, Mrs. Sevenbanks and her maid seemed all to have crept into their berths, made tranquil complaint. "Porter, this person has made a mistake and is annoying my family. Can you, perhaps, find the lady he wants in the other sleeper?"

"We's a-startin' now, sah. Anybody bes' git off if they isn't goin' along, sah. No stop till Sing Sing. Bes' hurry, sah," he admonished the excited newcomer.

The train was moving. They were off. The porter hurried out. As the speed of the train increased the two men rocked a little where they stood. Vasquez did not mind being carried off. He knew he could explain and pay fare to—where did the porter say?—Sing Sing, or further. He wondered if he would better go all the way to Chicago. There were reasons why he would rather not go; other reasons, perhaps stronger, why he should. The possibility of idle gossip in after days should not outweigh the necessity of protecting these

frightened women. He was sure he heard the maid whimpering, though the others hardly breathed.

The train rumbled on, more dully, through a tunnel. After a little an official of some sort came through—the conductor, Vasquez imagined. This employé he addressed in a tone of reasonable remonstrance. "This man has made a mistake and persists in annoying my family. One of the ladies has been ill; they have all re-

"Not is so!" cried da Veiga, hoarsely. "I did see 'er aunt, then I did buy one ticket—"

The conductor lifted his lantern. "Um-m, let me see the ticket. Yours, too, if you please, sir." He modified his tone somewhat in addressing the gentleman with the family. A slender hand came out from behind the curtains with the necessary slips. It was Ester Harding's hand with its "duchess" ring of opals and diamonds. The official returned the check to da Veiga. "This is all right to Sing Sing—in another car, not this." He eyed the peculiar-looking traveler shrewdly. "Foreigner, I presume. Well, you pass along ahead and I will look into this matter for you." He turned to Vasquez. "Lady sick? Four, two sections—" He hesitated. But Vasquez was prepared. He had produced a twenty-dollar bill. "I was not going myself," he explained, quietly. "I saw my family aboard and wished to get off. You might with this bill arrange for me. At the first stop I can alight."

"If so 'e did not bring my wife," cried da Veiga, "why she will not put out 'er 'ead till I see? One 'and I see, all diamonds."

The official regarded the bill. "Guess you'd better humor him," he suggested, under his breath. "Seems a little cracked."

Vasquez looked annoyed. "Since you request it." He turned and spoke through the drapery: "Jane, just look out here for a moment."

The curtains parted. A sandy head and a pair of reddened eyelids came

into view from the upper berth. The official looked at da Veiga. "Well, is that your wife?" he asked, sharply.

"No!" came the answer, in a roar of rage.

"Pass right along, then, please. Can't have the passengers disturbed."

"She is there!" da Veiga wailingly insisted.

Vasquez shrugged his shoulders. "How much longer must this go on? We paid for *sleeping* accommodations."

"Certainly, sir. Um-m—lady in lower berth wife's mother?"

"Who else should she be?" He hoped Mrs. Sevenbanks would forgive him. "In the morning," he added, "he can discover for himself."

"That is fair enough," said the official.

Da Veiga suddenly collapsed into meekness. "Vare well, Mr. Conductor. I go with you in that other car." His broad shoulders moved along the aisle. Vasquez drew a long breath. Suddenly he noticed great drops of perspiration on his face and hands. Was it such a warm night, then?

"Don Roberto!" he heard Ester Harding calling him.

"Yes, *señora*," he answered, in Spanish. "He has gone."

"But he will return."

"I hope not. If so, I will meet him at the door. At Sing Sing he must get off—before I do."

"At what time will that be?"

"In about an hour—or two, I suppose."

"*Ave Maria!* Who could have foreseen this? Jane put her head out?"

"Very nobly. We must remember Jane."

"Her mother, too, eh?"

"For heaven's sake, *señora*! It was unavoidable."

"Was everyone listening?"

"Not so particularly. It is true he yelled. You are all comfortable, *señora*, I trust, and I will go out to the other car and see where he is. He agreed to wait till morning, but his ticket is only to Sing Sing."

"Good heavens! Then go quickly, Don Roberto. Heaven protect you!"

XXIV

"You are asleep, Alma?"

"No."

"It is very hot up there?"

"I don't mind; but I am thirsty. Will you let me take your wrap to go for a drink?"

"Of course—here. . . . Can you get down? Don't fall. Wait; hadn't you better let me fetch the water?"

"I can go very well." She drew on the gauze-like traveling cloak. Her bare arms looked thin and pallid in the flowing sleeves. "I am all right now," she said; "I had not taken off my shoes, even."

"Hurry back."

"Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of—now." She balanced herself carefully along between the section hangings. On she went, to the end of the car. There Vasquez met and stopped her.

"Go back quickly!" he said; but too late. Da Veiga was confronting them.

"Liars of the devil!" was his greeting, in Spanish. "Liars of the infernal! You try to ruin a poor foreigner!" Suddenly he changed to English. "I will find that conductor and I will prove to 'im. Then I will make you to be sorry for this trick."

"Silence!" said Vasquez, in his own language. "You will leave this car; you have no right here. The porter will fling you out. And you will hold your tongue and leave this train at Sing Sing, and after that go back to New York. If you do all this, it may be this lady's family will have pity and not send you to prison for bigamy. You hear?"

Da Veiga only laughed. He seemed to feel master of the situation. "If I have one wife there is no bigamy," he said, returning to Spanish. "I have one at first, perhaps, and while she is yet living I marry another. Then the first one dies and I marry still another—they are all *diablos*. But

this last I can do because the second was not my wife by the law. These laws of this country are truly good and wise!"

"Enough of that! I say you must get out of here!"

"And I say I defy you! I make one scandal and I take back my wife that stands beside you. I take 'er back, and if she say one word I take the throat in my two 'ands so, and I choke—you 'ear, I choke—"

Alma gave a gasping cry and reached out and clung to Vasquez. "Roberto, save me!" she exclaimed. She hung to him in terror. He could feel her naked arms, cold and smooth as ivory, where the wide sleeves slipped back. "Save me!" she repeated.

He supported her for an instant, then, "Go back to your aunt," he said; "leave me to settle with him. I beg you to go back!"

Their eyes met. Each seemed passionately to implore the other.

"I will," she murmured, and obeyed.

"You will return to the other car," said Vasquez, slowly. "I will go with you and you will listen to what I have to say. On behalf of this lady and her family I will make a proposition to you, and you will agree to accept it—if you are wise. They may even allow you a sum of money. At any rate, you will escape the courts and prison. Now lead the way without a moment's waste of time. We shall be in Sing Sing in five minutes, and you get off there."

They were now out on the platform, where the day coach joined the sleeper.

"You think I am a fool," said da Veiga, returning to Spanish. "For money? I need only to go in there and drag that old woman with the blond wig from her berth. That old Mrs. Sevenbanks—she will give money, diamonds—all she has—if I will be quiet and make no scandal. I can get money. It is my wife I want. I will have my wife!"

"Your wife is in New York."

"Mentira!"

"Your wife is in New York. Go back to her and show sense. She likes you; go back and beg her pardon. And—hold your tongue!"

"For one million dollars I will not hold my tongue!"

"Then jail for years!"

"I have no fear. You—you are her lover, but she is my wife."

"I give you thirty seconds to get back to your seat—"

Da Veiga sprang upon him. Vasquez, though tall, was slight, but he was alert and wiry. They grappled, struggled. Da Veiga had the advantage.

Vasquez felt himself choking, strangling. Then by some chance movement he gained hold of the other's arm—a peculiar hold. Afterward, reading of Jit Jitsu methods, he wondered if he had saved himself unconsciously by one of them. Da Veiga uttered a peculiar cry and fell. He fell backward, seemed not to stop falling until down the steps . . . and the train went on in the darkness.

Vasquez, supporting himself weakly by the car door, heard someone inquiring, "What's the matter?" It was the conductor with the lantern.

He had not breath to reply at once. "That fellow—attacked me."

"Who, that foreign fellow?"

"Yes."

"Where is he gone now?"

Vasquez looked toward the outer darkness. "I don't know," he answered, slowly, with a shudder.

XXV

On a crisp Midwinter night two ladies well wrapped in furs descended from an automobile before the new waiting-room of the great station. Ester Harding was seeing off an English cousin by marriage, a Harding of agreeable manners, who was going to join a house party in New England. Ester was very cheerful. "They got it finished at last," she said, "and it's a work of art. I mean this station. Too well I remember a certain hot

night last Summer when it wasn't finished and we had to wait in a place around the corner, a Noah's Ark sort of place." She turned to the driver. "You are to remain for me, you know."

"But this is quite a charming arrangement," said the English lady as they entered the great hall. "It seems all marble and electricity."

Ester was looking about for seats. "So it is," she answered, carelessly. "And what a crowd! Trains for everywhere leaving all the time. You have ten minutes yet. By-the-bye, you were saying the Dows would be in your party. I hope you will like them."

"Which means *you* don't."

"I don't know them—no, that's wrong—I mean they don't know me."

"But they are friends of Mrs. Sevenbanks?"

"That is true. They will no doubt have much to ask you about Louise. Do not fail to tell them how enthusiastically she set sail for South America. They will not believe it, of course, but tell them just the same. I dare say I shouldn't have believed it myself. But she *was* in good spirits."

"You think she foresees a happy ending of—the romance?"

Ester shrugged lightly. "It was rather a matter of duty. Proper-minded people are always happiest when performing their duty, you

know. Alma was far from well, and it was Louise's duty to take her to a warmer climate. You couldn't expect the girl to be strong after a shock of that kind. . . . Vasquez broke it very gently, of course. Imagine! he kept the secret and allowed us to continue on all the way to Chicago. You see, when it happened the train was rapidly approaching a town, and aid was sent back at once."

"How dreadful! And the man was dead?"

"Absolutely. It *was* dreadful. . . . but somehow, you know, I didn't feel so terribly sorry. What impressed me was the way he handled the matter—I mean Vasquez. No scandal in the papers—positively miraculous, that. As the train came to a stop in the station he hurriedly bade us good-bye and assured us that da Veiga had already got off—quietly. Imagine! *Got off quietly!* We went on to Chicago and there found a telegram breaking the news to us."

"Fancy!" said the Englishwoman; "keeping it out of the papers *was* clever. Isn't it time for me to go aboard?"

"I fear it is, my dear."

"Then *au revoir*, Ester. By-the-bye, did this heroic Vasquez sail with Mrs. Sevenbanks and Alma?"

"Cousin Marian! you surprise me. Certainly not. He is perfectly good form. He waited for the following steamer."



AFFECTING MEMORIES

MILLIE—Why did the widow sell her parrot?

WILLIE—She said it reminded her of her late husband.



SURELY AN EXCEPTION

HE—Someone says he never knew a rogue who was not unhappy.

SHE—How about Cupid?

PIERROT'S HOUSE

By Bliss Carman

I

A STREET that's neither grand nor poor;
A number quite unknown to fame;
Stairs; then a door without a name;
Then lodgings where content is sure;

An air of luring quietude;
A littered table; notes, and scraps
Of writing—poetry perhaps;
Mirror and window panes smoke-blued;

Pictures; a shelf of books; a tray
Of glasses, and a plate or two;
Some silver old; some journals new;
Roses; a dancing girl in clay;

A shrine; a béret; one sabot;
Wine; cigarettes; a mask; a fan;
A Persian rug; a deep divan;
Repose and joy. Here lives Pierrot.

II

All day I keep my vigil here,
My day-dream, until dusk draws down,
And out of the great noise of town
Expected eager steps draw near.

And then the shadow I pursue
Grows substance; beauty, voice and touch,
I have so longed for, loved so much,
Dawn on me, and the dream comes true.

III

Come in, come in, sweetheart of mine,
And let the crazy world go by
With blare and dust and pageantry!
For here are books and love and wine.

The good God here has made a place
Where it is good for us to be,
And given it to you and me.
Lift up that merry little face!

IV

Go by, go by, you slaving throngs,
 With heavy footsteps and sad eyes,
 And never guess what paradise
 To one improvident belongs!

For we have eaten of the fruit
 Of knowledge, and know good from ill;
 And we have chosen love; while still
 The joyless argue and dispute.

Tut, tut! What is this idle prate
 Of "duty" and of "circumstance,"
 Of "if" and "but," and "means" and "chance?"
 But love, and love will make you great.

V

There is a corner of the room
 Where all his mistress' garments be,
 Hung up in order daintily,
 Breathing faint odors through the gloom.

Ah, friends, for you your gardens wide,
 Where you may walk the world away
 In a long, meditative day,
 With phlox and rose on either side.

He chooses the seclusion dim
 Of four walls and a door that locks,
 Where fairer things than rose or phlox
 Bloom in the scented dusk for him.

VI

When old romance and moonlight lie
 On every city square and tree,
 The moonflower, Pierrette, is she;
 Her lover moon, Pierrot, am I.

Children of beauty and of night,
 We lie awake and babble tales
 Of love, until the moonshine fails
 And slumber seals our happy plight.

VII

Here lives the innocent Pierrot;
 Freedom and beauty all he asks.
 For love will guide his joyous tasks,
 And truth is all that he would know.

THE PRICE OF ADMISSION

By Felicia Goddard

MRS. SIMPSON EXETER'S *victoria* stopped with a clatter under the *porte-cochère*. It was August, one of those rare afternoons when Newport allows itself to be not only clear but brilliant. There never was such blue of sea, such green of lawn, such pink hydrangeas. Even the red carpet on the marble steps seemed to have taken on a brighter hue than usual.

Mrs. Exeter was a very fine lady, almost a great person; so much so that never in the course of her life had she been forced to assert the fact. This was the more remarkable inasmuch as she was not a clever woman, nor was her husband a man of large fortune, as fortunes are considered by the people among whom Mrs. Exeter lived. She was, it is true, a marvelously pretty woman, looking scarcely thirty, though, as a matter of fact, she was more than ten years older, as the age of her son attested.

It was not her beauty, however, nor even her charm of manner, that had attained for her house the reputation of being the only one to which an entrée meant the achievement of all things socially. Mrs. Exeter, someone had said, could get anyone into society because she would never try. Here, perhaps, lay the clue to her power—in her polite aloofness from all struggle, her fine appreciation of availability and unavailability and her instinct for social fitness, as unerring as the willow wand's for water.

She had never been in the habit of calling on her husband's business friends, although on more than one

occasion it would have been to her advantage to do so. She had observed with some shrewdness that nothing harassed the people she knew so much, nothing rendered them so apologetic and uncomfortable, as their social obligations to persons they did not consider socially creditable. She resolved never to find herself in such a position.

Such a point of view is all very well with a docile husband, but when the person concerned is an only and much beloved son the matter takes on a different appearance, so different, indeed, that Mrs. Exeter's footman was even then inquiring whether Mrs. Burlington was at home. Mrs. Burlington was the wife of the principal partner in the firm where Bobby Exeter had found his first business opportunity. Beyond this nothing was known of her except that she had suddenly appeared on the horizon of Newport and had bought one of its most beautiful houses, to which, it seemed, no one had so far taken the trouble to go.

Hearing that she was in, Mrs. Exeter descended and mounted the steps with the assistance of her tall Empire parasol, trailing her pretty painted muslin skirts along the red carpet. The house had formerly belonged to a friend, and she noted in the blank gilded drawing-room how great a difference was made by the absence of certain admirably arranged flowers and ornaments, and especially of some familiar photographs. She wondered whether Mrs. Burlington displayed discretion, or the lack of it, in not exhibiting the portraits of her intimates.

An instant later her hostess entered. She was a young woman, slight, and so obviously well dressed that she ran the risk of entirely sinking her own individuality in that of her dressmaker. Yet this could never be wholly true, for her own personality was sufficiently striking. Her hair was pale blond, her skin somewhat dark and her blue eyes brilliant, more on account of their quality than their color. Her appearance presented—so slightly that to name it is to exaggerate it—the merest suggestion of a ferret. There was in her bearing that mingling of intelligence and sharpness that has made the American business man what he is.

The two ladies talked pleasantly on topics not absorbing to either until Mrs. Exeter, with her sweet, gracious smile, mentioned "your husband's kindness to my son." At this the other, instead of acknowledging the gracious expression, slowly rose to her feet and stood looking down at her guest, half-puzzled, half-amused.

"Do you know, Mrs. Exeter," she said, "I've been on the point of coming to see you a great many times in the last few days?"

"I should always have been glad to see you," answered Mrs. Exeter, polite but mystified.

Mrs. Burlington laughed. "Would you?" she said. "That's the question. To be brief, you are in possession of something that I would give a good deal for, and I am in possession of something for which you would give anything in the world. There seems to be some basis for barter here, don't you think?"

Mrs. Exeter liked neither the tone nor the substance of this speech, and she noted mentally that this was probably the inevitable consequence of making any advance to this sort of person, but she said, still pleasantly: "Oh, if you want to talk business, let my husband have the pleasure of coming to see you."

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do. My business had better be settled between us alone."

"Then," said Mrs. Exeter, getting

up and holding out her hand, "I'm sure it is useless to discuss it, for, you see, I am confident there is nothing you possess which I am so discourteous as to envy. Good-bye."

"One moment," put in the other woman, betraying a certain nervousness under her air of resolution. "You can't think of this naturally enough, because you don't know about it. Let me tell you. You speak of my husband's goodness to your son. Have you any idea how far it extends? Did you ever suspect that for the last two months it was the only thing that stood between your son and a criminal action?" She paused. "He's \$50,000 short in his accounts."

Mrs. Exeter was silent an instant, and then gasped: "You shall have the money to-morrow."

To her figures had always presented such mysterious uncertainty that the idea of being short in accounts seemed to her more a fresh proof of their accursedness than of any intentional knavery on the part of the accountant. Besides, like so many mothers, she did not think of her son as a responsible person, to be judged as worthy or unworthy, but instinctively considered him as a creature apart from standards, whose advocate she must always be, whose partisan she was without hearing the facts. She knew, nevertheless, that the world held a different estimate in such matters, knew that her son's career was ruined unless she could fulfil the promise she had just made, and this, so far as she could see, was quite impossible.

She took a step toward the door, however, as if to end the interview, but Mrs. Burlington again stopped her.

"But I don't want the money," she said, "and it really wouldn't do any good, unless Mr. Burlington contracted to keep the story secret. Everyone would know that Bobby Exeter had been \$50,000 behind, and even if anyone remembered to add that his family had eventually paid up it wouldn't help him much in

most people's eyes. The question is simply, will Burlington & Co. keep the thing quiet? Well, yes, I'll agree they shall, on one condition."

"What?" Mrs. Exeter had asked almost before she knew it.

"That you take me up; make me smart; make me one of these people."

Mrs. Exeter looked at her. "Oh, but why," she said—"why do you want such a thing? All my life I have gone among the people who were naturally my friends, just as you have gone among those who were naturally yours. What reason—what reason, in heaven's name, have you for supposing that mine are any more agreeable than yours?"

The ferret aspect became a trifle more apparent in Mrs. Burlington as she answered: "Thank you very much for the compliment to my friends, but you see the point isn't whether I'm a fool to want it, but that I do. I see these people every day driving or at the beach, and I read about their parties, or," she added, defiantly, "I hear about them from my servants, and I don't know one of them, not one, and it makes me wretched—it makes me feel physically sick to hear their names. I have just as much as they, and I'm a cleverer woman. So now you know what I want and what I'll do to get it."

"I think you overrate my power—"

Mrs. Exeter began, but was at once swept aside.

"No, I don't. You can do it if you wish. Oh, I don't mean ask me to two or three big entertainments. I mean have me with you all the time. Tell me what to do and what not to do. Talk to your friends about me until they believe I'm something worth while. There, I know you can if you want to. Is your son's secret worth it?"

"I must have time to think it over. I must speak to my son," Mrs. Exeter answered, unsteadily.

"Well, upon my word, isn't that rather shabby of you? If you speak to him, of course he'll let you off. He won't let you pay the price of his misdeeds. If I know Bobby Exeter,

he may be weak under temptation, but he won't force an unwelcome intimacy on his mother to save himself. If you want the whole thing to be made public I can't think of a better way than to consult your son before you sacrifice yourself to help him."

There was some force in this argument. It was quite true, Mrs. Exeter saw at once, that her high-spirited Bobby would refuse to let her make such a bargain, however advantageous to him. If she was to save him she must do it secretly and at once, certainly without committing herself to paper, as his present absence would have demanded.

"You know," Mrs. Burlington suggested, gently, "a young man in his position has temptations. My husband often says that he blames himself as much as the boy for having subjected him to such a test."

At this unexpected kindness the tears came to Mrs. Exeter's eyes, and at the word temptation all Bobby's extravagant tastes leaped to her remembrance. She recalled that twice of late he had appealed to his father for an increase in his allowance, and had appealed in vain. She had herself seen less of him for the last two months than ever before. A thousand small incidents of this nature occurred to her mind to strike conviction deeper.

She, like most women, had but a vague and impersonal idea of masculine standards of honor. She felt that her son had been unfortunate rather than wrong. Her first desire to speak to him died away. It would be too cruel for her to be the person to drag him through the humiliation of confession. Whatever she did could be done without spoken word between them.

It was really surprising, in the course of the next few days, how many people asked each other whether they knew Mrs. Burlington, "that delightful friend of Mrs. Exeter's." Before two weeks had gone by nine women out of ten pronounced themselves extremely fond of her. She

was so well dressed, so intelligent, and withal possessed of so much *usage du monde* as, not a few added, was only to be expected of anyone you met at Mrs. Exeter's.

This lady had indeed brought all the weight of her intelligence and experience to bear. She knew that it was not enough for an aspirant to be *well* dressed; her appearance must be so authoritative in such matters that merely to behold her was an education in feminine attire. She taught her pupil—a difficult task—the necessity of being agreeable without being aggressive, taught her that it made no difference, was perhaps undesirable, that she herself should be conversationally brilliant if only she succeeded in making others think themselves so; and above all, Mrs. Exeter impressed upon her the advantages of commanding herself to unattractive husbands of attractive wives, those unfortunates whom no one has ever wanted to sit next to at dinner. It was along this line that Mrs. Burlington achieved her most conspicuous successes. Hosts who for years had sat glum and neglected at the foot of their own tables suddenly found themselves provided with a companion willing to exert herself to the utmost for their amusement. Naturally these gentlemen, surprised and flattered, clamored for her society; naturally their wives, amiably anxious to keep them happy, readily acceded to their demands.

In the midst of this excitement Bobby Exeter arrived from New York to spend Saturday with his parents. His mother drove down to the boat to meet him. He complained bitterly of the heat in town. It was not, she felt, her imagination that he looked worn and aged.

On the way home they passed Mrs. Burlington, and a cordial greeting was given and returned. Bobby turned to his mother—was it in surprise or anxiety? She answered his look.

“I've seen her a great deal lately. She dines with us to-night.”

“Well, I can't see what you see

in—” he began, and stopped. “Do you really like her?”

She felt tempted to ask what other motive could be prompting her, but contented herself with saying: “She's been tremendously taken up.”

“Bless me!” said Bobby. “What next!”

The subject dropped, to be taken up later by Bobby himself. He wished his mother hadn't asked the woman to dine. Old Burlington was well enough, but his wife— She was vulgar; she was pushing; she was “on the make.” Bobby had supposed his mother had better taste.

To be attacked on the score of taste was too much for Mrs. Exeter. She said, bitterly: “Apparently it doesn't occur to you that I may have reasons beside my own enjoyment.”

“My advancement, you mean?” he asked, sharply. “Why, then, drop it, by all means. I don't think I can stay much longer with Burlington.” He paused. The carriage stopped at the door, and he added, hastily: “Don't tell my father.”

The word “*can*” struck terror to his mother's mind. If he had only said he did not wish to stay much longer with his present employer! She answered nothing, and went to her own room dispirited. Before his arrival she had cherished a dim hope that he would treat the whole affair so lightly or so simply that it would be possible to speak of it, and that some explanation between them would follow. At first she had been encouraged by his evident dislike of her intimacy with Mrs. Burlington, for surely he would not be slow to grasp the advantage of the situation. Almost at once, however, she perceived that he had totally misapprehended it. He evidently thought, misled perhaps by her statements, that she had been only one of many to discover and like the wife of his chief. He supposed his secret safe, but doubtless considered it seriously threatened by the intimacy, which he continued to oppose with all his might.

And now his father, usually not

quick to notice moods, observed a change in him. He was silent and abstracted. Mrs. Exeter noted that he was never away from the house at mail time and always intercepted the postman at the door. Her heart sank, too, to see how continually his thoughts ran on money—a most unusual symptom in him—and how inevitably, when they were alone, he brought the conversation round to discuss some occupation that would bring him in a quick and large return.

She laid a trap for him by suggesting railroading, and almost wept aloud as he fell into it by declaring that for him this was one of the most impossible of careers; that he must have money within six months or he should never want it at all. This was plain talking.

"I can't see the reason for that, Bob," she said, faintly.

"You would if you knew everything," he responded, looking very gloomy and burying his head in his hands. For a second she feared he was about to tell her all, and suddenly losing courage, changed the subject.

Sunday evening he went back without having defined his position further. At parting Mrs. Exeter asked him, with some constraint, if he intended coming up for the following Sunday.

"Oh, yes, I suppose so," he answered, "if I'm still in this part of the world. I've a great mind to go to the Klondike and find gold, or cut my throat."

"Perhaps that would be the best thing to do," his mother answered.

They looked at each other with intense eyes, and he went without speaking.

In the week that ensued Mrs. Burlington's triumphs became more and more striking. In all her suffering Mrs. Exeter could not but feel a certain glow of pride as she looked on the evidences of her own power. It was not so much that she had made Mrs. Burlington liked as that she had made her likable; not so much that her influence had raised the woman

as that her corrections and advice had made the rise possible.

On Friday, much to his mother's surprise, Bobby appeared, unannounced and unexpected, still looking white, but complaining less of the heat. She fancied she saw in him the traces of a final determination. He admitted loss of weight.

She was not left long in doubt. Bobby was obviously seeking an interview with her, which she as carefully avoided. At last, the second evening of his stay, the matter was settled by Mr. Exeter's being called away while they were all sitting together after dinner. It took only a second for Bobby to fling himself beside her on the sofa and launch into, as her dazed mind discovered, the narrative of the one passion of his life.

Her name was Flora, and she was but eighteen. She was being taken abroad by her aunt in the Autumn to study music for years. If he couldn't do something before she went, if he couldn't make some definite proposal with the consent of his parents, and show some prospect of being able to marry, they would take her away and he should never see her again. They would marry her to an old German banker who was following her about like a dog. Wouldn't his mother, Bobby wanted to know, do something, do anything with his father?

To this and much more of the same sort Mrs. Exeter listened with the manner of one who has suddenly sat down under a cold waterfall. At last she was able to gasp out, "But in your position, Bobby, you should not think of matrimony."

"Oh, I know," he answered, "I ought to wait until I have an assured income, if I wait until I'm ninety. Marriage is a serious thing—well, it's not one-tenth as serious as letting the only woman you will ever love slip through your fingers."

"I was not thinking of your poverty," said his mother, who was not pleased that he was still ready to dupe her, "but of dishonor."

"What do you mean?" he asked,

growing quickly crimson, either from guilt or anger.

"Dear boy," said his mother, laying her hand on his, "understand, I never blamed you. I didn't speak before because I thought silence made it easier. I thought you understood, or I should have relieved your mind long ago, when I saw you looking so worn and anxious. Your secret is quite safe. The Burlingtons will never tell. Mrs. Burlington's social elevation has been the price I paid, dear Bobby, I need not say how gladly."

"But I don't understand. My secret? You don't mean that Mrs. Burlington has found out about Flora? How could she?"

"Flora! Don't be absurd, Bobby. Her husband told her about the \$50,000 that you—that was—" Mrs. Exeter began to cry feebly—"about the mistake in your books. I knew it was nothing but a mistake; I understood—"

"I wish to goodness I did. What did Mrs. Burlington tell you?" He shot a wild arrow at fiction in the hope of bringing down fact. "That I had stolen \$50,000 from the bank?"

His mother nodded convulsively. "She told me the first time we met—one day when I went to see her."

"And you believed her?"

"In a way she tried to be kind. She spoke of your temptations—"

"Now may heaven preserve us from our mothers!" cried Bobby, starting up.

There was a long silence. She wept on; he went and stood beside the table with his hands in his pockets. At last, without stooping to approach, he said:

"Well, you know it was a lie."

"How could I tell? I knew nothing about it—"

"You knew all about *me*."

"But so little of business."

Bobby was sufficiently intelligent to see here the root of the whole matter and to know that she was suffering as poignantly as the most vindictive could desire.

"Well," he said, "that dreadful woman has done her trick all right. She has turned your lack of faith in me into a very pretty social success."

His mother sprang to the writing table.

MADAM:

The explanation with my son which you so skilfully contrived to postpone has this moment taken place. You will scarcely be surprised to learn that the honor of your future acquaintance will not be mine, and that my friends will not be slow in learning the character of a person for whom I cannot too deeply regret having made myself responsible.

She signed it and despatched it with all possible speed.

An answer returned almost as quickly by Mrs. Burlington's footman. Her servants had lately been put into new liveries, and none presented a smarter appearance.

MY DEAR MRS. EXETER:

Few examples of maternal appreciation have afforded me as much amusement as your immediate belief in my assertions in regard to your son. Exactly how much either of you will gain by a public statement of your low opinion of his honesty you are doubtless better fitted to estimate than I. If, however, you intend to declare open war, it must be a satisfaction to one of your generous disposition to know that owing to your discriminating kindness we shall at least meet as equals. In any case, let me take this opportunity of thanking you for the pleasant and, as I think you will find, permanent position you have afforded me among the number of your delightful friends.

Cordially yours,
BERTHA BURLINGTON.



DE L'AMOUR

By Edgar Saltus

PEOPLE have wondered why Mr. Austin was made Poet Laureate. The reason is quite simple. Mr. Austin lives on very good terms with his wife, and that pleased the Queen. It pleases us, too. So, also, does the result. It constitutes a fine case of what a boulevardier might—if he thought of it—describe as *lauriat mediocritas*. Moreover, it shows, or seems to show, that connubial virtues are more estimable than literary sins. That is quite as it should be. But the converse of the proposition is equally true. Domestic difficulties are preferable to halting hexameters. The world is filled with good husbands. Good verse is more scant. For that matter, the better the verse the worse the husband. An ideal spouse would be both a perfect lover and a perfect poet. But no mere mortal has succeeded in being both, for any length of time, at least, and very naturally, too. The Muse is highly jealous. The task of serving two masters is nothing to having two mistresses on your hands.

These views have, we fear, a false air of originality. But we claim no copyright on them. They have been running about the bookshelves ever since books were shelved. Said Michelangelo: "Art is wife enough for me." Said Flaubert: "However refractory the Muse may be, she is better than any woman." Said Bacon: "Matrimony is an impediment to great enterprises." Kant, Newton, Beethoven, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Gibbon, Macaulay, Handel, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Camoëns, Voltaire, Cavour and Chauncey De-

pew appear to have agreed with him. In such fine company we may not presume to intrude. But we are quite sure that there are plenty of people who long for heaven if for no other reason than because there is no marrying or giving in marriage there. We have not a doubt but that while Mrs. Carlyle was among us she felt pretty much that way, too. We have not a doubt but that Mrs. Donizetti did also. For Donizetti used to get very indignant at that lady, which was not philosophic, and occasionally beat her, which was certainly not polite. Even so, the exercise must have been good for him. One day, five minutes after laying her out, he composed the "*Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali*," an aria which a seraph might envy—the most bewitching in the entire Italian repertory, and which anyone who has heard the last act of "Lucia" will recall. Exercise of a similar nature Byron took with his little Guiccioli, and with proper poetic results. One of the liveliest scenes in "Les Trois Mousquetaires" was evolved by Dumas just after he had torn hair by the handful from the head of a young person who honored him with her affection. "Were her tears but pearls," he announced, "I would make a necklace of them."

These incidents happened a long time ago, and fail to stir us very deeply. They do not demonstrate much, either, and what they do it would not be honest to print. But, in conjunction with others, they lead us to assume a few little things; for instance, that had Petrarch got as close to Laura as he wished, he would

have maltreated her or the Muse would have maltreated him. We assume, with equal ease, that had Beatrice been a reality instead of a dream, the world would be minus a volume or two of good verse. We assume with equal readiness that had the affairs of Ariosto been as immaterial, the world would be plus a volume or two which it lacks.

"The position of lover," said Byron, "is not a sinecure." Nor is it. There are times and occasions when it is hard labor. It is a position suited only to the mentally idle. In the life known as cerebral it stultifies when it does not wreck. Consider Sappho. Because a little mick preferred another mouth to hers she killed herself. And consider Antony. Because of a viper of the Nile he flung away the sovereignty of half the world. Abélaud should have known better than to behave as he did. On the other hand, had he omitted to, his name would be the echo of nothing and that of Héloïse be lost. Such is fame.

Such, too, is the fame of Tasso. His verse is less interesting than his woes. The latter were quite poignant. Goethe wrote a play about them, Donizetti an opera and Delacroix added a picture. The picture represents the poet in prison. That is a fine place for a gentleman. But Tasso, instead of confining himself, as he should have done, to the raising of anapests and *rime amoroise*, found, in the wide leisures of the Court of Ferrara, nothing better to do than to make up to Leonore of Este. The lady did not object. On the contrary. But her brother, the Duke of Ferrara, did. By way of putting a stop to the proceedings he had Tasso tossed into a madhouse. Whether or not the honor of the lady was at stake is a detail, immaterial at that. There are women who discredit virtue in affecting to possess it. We have not a doubt that Leonore was one of them. Even so, and even otherwise, we do not blame the Duke. We have noted before, and perhaps may be permitted to note again, that there is nothing so per-

versive as a young poet, except an old one.

How perverse Tasso succeeded in becoming we may surmise and never know. What we do know is that he got what he deserved. He ought to have left all that sort of thing to her. In the case of an ordinary individual we should of course strum a different guitar. Ordinary individuals are free to do as they like, and be hanged to them. But the thinker has a mission. For the furtherance of that mission every extraneous desire and each subsidiary whim should be locked in cages, where, for the fun of the thing now and then, he may be permitted to go and see how they are. Women should be to him the *joujoux* they used to be and not the *objets de luxe* they have become. Better still, he should have everything, even to sex, in his brain.

Seraglios are delightful to read about and particularly to write about, but to live in them must be deadly dull. Personally we have never tried it. It is true we have lacked the opportunity. Otherwise we should doubtless jump at the chance. But then, thank the Lord, we have no mission. It is a great thing to be an ordinary individual. *Le métier de poète laisse à désirer.* Just how much the business of poet leaves to be desired it would take the ghost of Tasso to tell, of de Musset, too, of Byron as well. There are three whom the love of woman has led from deserts of disgust into oases of ennui. There are three whose genius women have slaughtered. It is only that we may not seem to know more than we do that we refrain from citing three hundred. Yet while we are at it there is a case so pertinent, so recent and so picturesque that it would be a shame to let it go. Here it is.

During the Third Empire a young man appeared at the Tuilleries. Eugénie kissed him, and in the process declared him to be the handsomest prince in the world. At the compliment the young man blushed, and blushed still more at the embrace. His name was Ludwig. By profession

he was King. In addition, he followed the entirely genteel avocation of lover. But *en amateur* merely. He had yet to learn that the art of loving and the art of being loved are separate and distinct. It was his cousin who taught him. This young woman, afterward Duchesse d'Alençon, lived in the heart of a Bavarian forest. A poet who chanced to encounter her there has related that he mistook her for a sylph—one of those enchanting apparitions that dwelt in dim green woods and long German ballads, and whom princes used to woo. Ludwig mistook her for a saint. To err poets and princes are liable alike.

There is, a thinker announced, as much mud in the upper classes as in the lower, only, he added, in the former it is gilded. In the case of the young woman Ludwig appears to have discovered the mud, but with the gilt off and the guilt on. Yet not, of course, at once. Meanwhile the girl intended no wrong, and that, perhaps, because she never would have considered wrong anything she wished to do. Moreover, she was very pretty, and pretty girls have more incentives than those who are not. Then, too, she had another excuse. It had been predicted that she would be burned alive. No one believes much in predictions unless Time comes along and verifies them. In her case Time did. A few years ago she was caught in the fire that occurred in the Paris Bazaar. With a fate such as that before her it may be she tried to make the most of the worst. If the supposition be correct her success was remarkable. She ruined her life and that of her lover as well.

Ludwig looked as if he had stepped from a fairy tale. As he looked he acted. He charmed peasants and empresses. He suggested romance incarnate and enthroned. These suggestions his cousin lived to see him change into realities. She lived to see him dot the country he ruled with palaces of enchantment. She lived, too, to see him hide himself in them. She lived to see the handsomest prince in the world change

into a bloated sot. She lived to realize that it was her work, and so realizing, perhaps was glad to die. For, if not a saint, at least she was human. When ultimately, in cups of champagne strained through violets, he tried to drown his reason, she lost her own. Subsequently, as noted, she lost her life. It may be that it was fate that felled her, yet in that case it is a pity that fate was so slow. Had it but throttled her in the cradle or smothered her in the green and quiet of the slumbrous wood, Europe might have enjoyed the spectacle of an ideal King reigning ideally. But the discovery that the girl who had imparadised his heart was no better than the law allows transformed *Lohengrin* into *Hamlet*. He turned his back on her, and incidentally on the world. There developed within him a horror of being seen. At Munich a mechanical device enabled him to be served by invisible hands. When he drove it was at night. Now and again he disappeared entirely. No one knew where he was. Infrequently he received at dinner. The guest whom he preferred was Louis XIV. With him he was quite at home. The royal phantom came and went at his bidding. Yet that which pleased him most was to stroll, crowned and sceptred, through the splendidly lighted halls of Herrenchiemsee and people the empty rooms with the great poets and princes of the past. With these, too, he was at home and every inch the King, King of the Kingdom of Beauty and of Dreams—of Chastity, too, for never once was the mystic music with which he flooded those mystic halls broken by the discord of a woman's voice. His cousin had cured him of that. *Et voilà ce que c'est que l'Amour.*

After the episode with this lady the life of Ludwig of Bavaria was a long anachronism, but a very beautiful one, marred only by the insanity that overtook him in the end. That insanity was in the family. His brother is mad as a hatter, and his grandfather lost over Lola Montez the few wits that he had. Behind

these people, back through the chronicles of the House of Wittelsbach, there are chapters choked with crime, scenes smeared with sin, a story of calamity singularly straight, one in which other descendants, notably the Empress of Austria and her son Rudolph, had their undoubted share. For the purposes of this paragraph it would be convenient to assume that there is a curse on the clan. And if there be, that curse is love. In any event, it is the cause of their dementia. But then, apart from gold, is not love the cause of every folly that has occurred since the days when, for Helen's sake, the war of the world was fought? Truly, when you come to sit down and think it over, or even, as we do, stand up and dictate, the panorama of unhallowed disasters that unrolls does not make one much in love with love.

Yet though, like gold, it has its defects, like gold, too, it has its charms. Every reputable writer has denounced it and disreputably enjoyed all he could get. To say one thing and mean something else happens to all, even to the best. But the main point about it, and which, as such, we have left to the last, is the fact that concerning it doctors disagree. That, however, is natural enough. Love has a hundred symptoms, a thousand phases. It may come at first sight—which does not mean second sight. It may come from propinquity, and also from the lack of it. The less we see of people the more delightful they appear. It may come of curiosity, which is the instinct of self-improvement. It may come of sympathy, which is the pleasure we take in the unhappiness of someone else. It may come of antipathy, for in every affection there is the germ of hate. It may come of

mutual attraction. That is very common. It may come of natural selection. That is very rare.

Natural selection presupposes a discernment that leads a man through mazes of women to one woman in particular, to the woman who to him is the one woman in all the world, to the woman who has been awaiting him and who recognizes him when he comes. And it is just because the process is exceptional that doctors disagree, husbands and wives also, sweethearts and swains as well, poets and princesses, too. Therein lies the root of the disasters that it has given us a real pleasure to relate. It is, indeed, a pleasant subject. But it is one that would have perplexed Euclid, and for all we know to the contrary, doubtless did. The more abundantly it is written about the more abundant does ignorance appear. For love is one of those phenomena which elude exact knowledge. A huckster of phrases thought he summed it up in defining it as the Why and Wherefore of Creation. Another huckster nauseatingly labeled it the sweetest shape of pain.

Everything being possible, it may be either and even both. Yet studies and statistics have rather inclined us to the theory that, apart from pathological conditions, love is either the affection of somebody else or else the fusion of two egotisms, the contact of two epiderms, the tragedy of those that lack it, the boredom of those that don't, and in this country the prime incentive to matrimony, which also studies and statistics have led us to regard as three months of adoration, three months of introspection, and thirty years of toleration, with the children to begin it all over anew. *Et voilà ce que c'est que l'Amour.*



CHARMING CREDULITY

BESSIE—Why does Cholly carry a rabbit's foot?

LAURA—Someone told him it would cure a hair-lip.

GHOSTS IN NAUMKEAG

By W. B. Cohen

I have heard, (but not believ'd) the
spirits of the dead may walk again.

—*Winter's Tale.*

THE Higginses had moved to Naumkeag at a certain point of prosperity in Mr. Higgins's leather business, because in Naumkeag the social fortress is less impregnable than in Boston. The Higginses bought a house in Hazel street, of course, and Mrs. Higgins promptly emigrated to the spirituality and boy choir of St. Xantippe's.

Mrs. Higgins's knowledge of how to give a dinner amounted almost to inspiration, and Mrs. Higgins's social presence was all that vehement good form, vast though discriminating amiability and one hundred and eighty pounds avoirdupois can assure. Naturally, in half a dozen years the Higgins blood was virtually as blue as lapis lazuli. Mrs. Higgins matronized the Assemblies and possessed a calling list that was the *Almanach de Gotha* of Naumkeag's exclusive circles. Beyond this she recognized the division of mankind into three classes—society, persons and the masses. She spoke emphatically of the masses and was a burnished tower of strength in the Naumkeag Associated Charities.

In half a dozen years Miss Miranda Higgins grew from the short skirts and pigtail of twelve to the maidenly perfection of eighteen. At twelve this young lady's membership in the Hazel street afternoon dancing class had been regarded by her mamma as an extreme social consummation. Later, after Mrs. Higgins's intimacy with Miss Augusta Potts had ripened

and borne fruit, she looked back with mingled mortification and forgetfulness on so limited a point of view.

Miss Augusta Potts was a young lady of about forty-five who was a specialist on Naumkeag society. As other young ladies are attracted variously by Love, Art or the Uplifting of Mankind, so Miss Augusta ran all to ancestors and genealogy. The Potts family, to begin with, was an extremely genealogical one. Indeed, Miss Augusta rarely spoke of herself individually. It was always "We Pottses as a family," as one might say: "We Plantagenets," or "We Schleswig-Holsteins." There was more than a suspicion in Naumkeag that Christopher Columbus and George Washington were merely Pottses in disguise.

Under Miss Augusta's guidance Mrs. Higgins came to perceive that the most conspicuous figures within the Naumkeag social ramparts were, as a rule, those who had achieved their enviable position recently, whose aristocratic growth owed its fierce luxuriance rather to assiduous hothouse methods than immemorial husbandry.

As a matter of fact, Naumkeag society is a beautiful though somewhat complicated pattern of rings within rings. The contingent of the newly grand, though it lends to Naumkeag society that superlative flavor for which it is justly celebrated, is the outside ring. Next inside are those very agreeable individuals who have known the right people as far back as the Civil War. These have had time to grow accustomed to the rarefied social atmosphere and to forget any little awkward circumstances connected with

their forbears, such as livery stables or butcher carts or fishing dories. Still further within is the famous sea-captain ring, magnificent old families—in a greater or less state of repair—founded by those high-complexioned, profane, God-fearing old skippers who brought the wealth of the Orient into Naumkeag harbor when Naumkeag still eclipsed Boston as the great seaport of New England. Innermost of all is that charmed circle of ancient houses whose ancestors fought and prayed and hanged one another's grandmothers for witches, and incidentally laid the foundations of Naumkeag, before such innovations as the American eagle and the Stars and Stripes were dreamed of. These personages, it should be added, are no longer a considerable factor in Naumkeag society. Whether they were drawn by the more metropolitan attractions of Boston or whether, being the innermost of so many circles, they felt the atmosphere to be somewhat close, has never been settled. Their exodus to Boston, however, marks the reconstruction of Naumkeag society along its present engaging lines.

Mrs. Higgins did not learn these facts all at once, because they are really much more complicated than they seem. The circles shade one into another almost imperceptibly, and it takes a practiced eye to distinguish the wavering dividing lines. Besides, they criss-cross most confusingly, the result of intermarriages between component parts of different circles before grandfathers were such a craze in fashionable society. But Miss Augusta was an expert on all fine technical questions of "Who is who?" Probably there was not a genealogical tree in the county of any girth or greenness up which she had not shinned and examined branch, leaf, graftings and green twigs with unsparing eye. And under such inspiration Mrs. Higgins was bound to develop rapidly.

As a result, in a very few years she found her soul craving something more than either of the two outside

circles could offer. Thus, by the time Miranda was sixteen, Mrs. Higgins's fondest dreams pictured that young lady as presiding, some day, over a household on Hazel street, to which old Nankin china and genuine family heirloom furniture, of the sea-captain period, should lend their charm. Everybody in Naumkeag society has a house full of antique furniture. How much of this is lineally descended, how much has made its way into select households from some less restricted source of family treasures, it would be difficult—and imprudent—to say.

Having attained so much there was no reason why Mrs. Higgins should not feel that she had earned contentment. She was the possessor of an irrepressible sympathy with those names that led all the rest in Naumkeag society. She was able to regard with lenient interest and incredulity the small successes of later comers than herself in the Naumkeag social paradise. In short, Mrs. Higgins would have been quite willing to refrain from further conquests. But at this happy juncture in her affairs Fate stepped in—Fate and that same original old Serpent, with the most plausible and seductive apple that was ever dangled before a fond mother's eye. And Fate was embodied in the pleasing person of Miss Miranda.

For Miranda did not loiter at sixteen. She went to seventeen and then to eighteen; and at eighteen she came out, in white tulle and cherry ribbons, at the most exclusive coming-out party imaginable. And this was the beginning of the end of Mrs. Higgins's well-earned peace of mind.

II

MIRANDA as a débutante at eighteen was a surpassing success. Personally she was a foolish, sentimental young thing, with a shocking habit of indiscriminate friendliness. She had unexceptionable eyes and danced marvelously. On Naumkeag Assembly

nights young gentlemen came from Beverly, Boston, Brookline and Cambridge for three steps with her on the polished floor of Winthrop Hall.

Before the Winter was half over Mrs. Higgins had seen visions. One day she actually found the impression growing stealthily in her mind that after all Nankin china, antique furniture and Hazel street might be the least bit in the world—shall we say provincial? And Naumkeag sea captains? Very worthy persons, without doubt, but were they not very much in trade? Medford rum and missionaries and rice and tea and jute—what a peculiar odor!

Mrs. Higgins looked out on the great world and observed how much more extensive Beacon street was than Hazel street; how much more arborescent the family trees. Sea captains?—Colonial governors! Antique furniture?—household wares from the *Mayflower*, the *Santa Maria*! Nankin china?—family plate! Without doubt, to an unconfined soul Naumkeag had its limitations. And meanwhile Mrs. Higgins set the seal of good form on the ancient mythology by turning herself into a benign maternal Argus. For the delegations from Boston and Brookline appeared at Winthrop Hall and the Higgins front door in increasing numbers. As the Winter advanced it must have been plain to the blindest of parents that Miranda must soon receive inducements to take up her abode, as is commended of St. Paul, in each and several of these localities. And Miranda was a foolish, sentimental young thing.

Even Miss Augusta began to prove insufficient for Mrs. Higgins at this point. For Miss Augusta, infallible as she was within her sphere, had never dreamed to outsoar willow ware and Naumkeag's ancient marine. Mrs. Higgins's soul, on the contrary, was expanding as if fed on yeast. She gazed on Miranda, and there sprang up before her mind's eye such family trees as only certain hallowed precincts of Boston could bear—genealogical flora with their roots firmly imbedded in the dark ages—a grove,

a perfect forest, that rustled deliciously and seemed to beckon to her.

She gazed on Miranda, and her imagination sat down at ancestor-in-law dinner tables groaning under the weight of family plate. She blushed when she thought of the obscure Mongolian origin of Nankin blue, and she became a student of family plate. Nay, she specialized it, as one specializes the eyes of crustaceans or the particle *av*. And finally, as if her waking hours would not suffice for the delightful contemplation, Mrs. Higgins dreamed wonderful exclusive dreams. Night after night, when her eyes closed in slumber, the silver services of the world passed before her in review, innumerable, precious, antique shapes, their lustre worn dull by the congratulatory caresses of the centuries, rich in crests and coats-of-arms with which an H might be easily and artistically intertwined!

So, gazing on Miranda, on the unguarded frontier of her consciousness wild thoughts danced war-dances. Beacon street—Newport—New York—London—Paris—barons—earls—dukes! Mrs. Higgins sighed and shivered and felt a thrill. The simple pleasures of Naumkeag were no more for her.

III

THE Higginses lived in one half of one of those old Colonial houses with hand-carved woodwork and splendid staircases for which Naumkeag is famous. The other half of the Higgins house had been vacant for a year. Miss Cad Nourse, aged seventy, had formerly owned and lived in it. No one in society had known Miss Cad except on a purely good Samaritan basis. Miss Augusta said that her family had once been undeniable—the sea-captain ring—but it had decayed steadily for seventy-five years, and Miss Cad was the last of her line. Miss Augusta's and Mrs. Higgins's combined efforts had failed to evolve a reason why Miss Cad insisted on wearing out her poverty.

stricken old existence under the very eyes of the gallant and the gay on Hazel street. At one time there had even been an atrocious rumor that she thought of letting rooms! How much more sensible and comfortable a simple cottage on some quiet back street! But Miss Cad had stayed and continued the decaying process where generations of her family had decayed before her. Until one day—perhaps her heart smote her with the enormity of her imposition—she consented to die.

Whereupon the house had been boarded up, with all of Miss Cad's time-worn effects standing in their places, and had remained so, a growing dinginess and aggravation to the best families. It was said that the property had reverted to a distant relative, but this was merely another rumor.

Mrs. Higgins shivered slightly whenever she looked at the empty house. Miss Cad had been a trial, but the possibility of compromising neighbors which the tenantless domicile offered was appalling. What a temptation was offered to some socially unwashed family to come and bathe in the fierce light that beat on the Higgins front door!

To her secret soul Mrs. Higgins admitted that she had reached a point when even the innermost circles of Naumkeag could offer few allurements to her as neighbors. For by this time, waking and sleeping, she had supped off the family plate of two continents. She had shaken hands with Governor Winthrop and William the Conquerer. Naumkeag? Hazel street? sea captains? Was she not connected—through her daughter—with the immortal goddesses?

IV

MRS. HIGGINS saw the whole thing from her parlor window. A cab drew up before Miss Cad's house. There were two dingy-looking trunks behind and several queer-looking boxes on the driver's seat. The cab

door opened and a young man stepped out, carrying a bag and several more queer boxes. The young man's looks did not commend him to Mrs. Higgins; there was something about him that strongly suggested the middle classes. The side of his face nearest her bore a scar from the corner of the eye down over the jaw, and he limped slightly as he crossed the sidewalk.

"What a nice-looking young man!" said Miranda, who was in the room.

"My dear," said Mrs. Higgins, "will you ask Betty to bring in the tea?"

The young man disappeared into Miss Cad's house after a struggle with the front door. Then he came out again to help the cabman with the trunks. He seemed to Mrs. Higgins to handle trunks like a hotel porter. On the end of each trunk were the initials S. D.

"How exciting!" said Miranda, who was again in the room.

"My dear," said Mrs. Higgins, "you might ask Nora to light the gas."

A few moments later the shutters of Miss Cad's second-story front room opened with indecorous slams, and a light streamed out.

That night Naumkeag society knew that Miss Cad's house had a tenant—not a family whom one knew or might consent to know, not even an indigent but harmless old maid, but a dubious-looking, single-handed, impossible male unknown, dropped down with outlandish luggage from no one knew where, with no further credentials than the key of Miss Cad's front door and whatever identity might lurk under the irresponsible initials S. D.

The next afternoon the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne, rector of St. Xantippe's, made a parish call on Mrs. Higgins. The Rev. Mr. Browne was very popular with the ladies of St. Xantippe's. He was broad in his views and had a lovely voice. Otherwise he was a small, quiet man, extremely youthful-looking and ex-

tremely diffident. In this last quality, of course, St. Xantippe's recognized something painfully mediocre. The Rev. Mr. Browne appeared to be unaware of the fact that the Higher Criticism has entirely discredited humility and self-doubt in the Episcopal clergy. In place of Omnipotence and the other modern signs of Apostolic succession he merely blushed and looked confused. Still, St. Xantippe's comforted itself with the thought that its rector was young and would grow spiritually.

Mrs. Higgins had numerous important matters to discuss with the Rev. Mr. Browne—the girls' sewing class, the St. Xantippe's vaudeville and parish fair and the reorganization of the boy choir; but this afternoon her mind would hold but one subject. Although the Rev. Mr. Browne had heard several fragmentary versions, she proceeded to give him an eye-witness account of the suspicious arrival.

"Two dilapidated trunks," Mrs. Higgins was saying, "and half a dozen outrageous-looking boxes, with S. D. painted on the end of them, whatever S. D. may stand for—"

At this moment Mrs. Higgins was interrupted by a peculiar occurrence. The Rev. Mr. Browne, who had been leaning back in his chair, politely attentive, suddenly sat bolt upright, blushing furiously.

"S. D.!" exclaimed the Rev. Mr. Browne, somewhat wildly. "Strange-looking boxes! Did you say the initials were S. D.? What sort of a looking man was he, Mrs. Higgins?"

Mrs. Higgins for a moment felt mildly alarmed. The Rev. Mr. Browne was forgetting his clerical dignity and repose. He was, in fact, painfully excited. He sat on the edge of his chair, his voice husky, his whole person tremulous with some half-suppressed emotion. Then the scent of something extraordinary partially effaced Mrs. Higgins's alarm.

"Why, he was an extremely ordinary looking person," she said, "with a small mustache—and a scar—and a

limp. Perhaps you know of him, Mr. Browne. Is there anything dreadful about him? Perhaps—"

Mrs. Higgins did not finish. The Rev. Mr. Browne had danced toward her and seized her hand in a grip that made her wince.

"Very extraordinary!" he said. "Pardon my haste—regret very much—very much obliged—very sorry—"

Before Mrs. Higgins could catch her breath he was out in the hall, still mumbling incoherently. She heard him open the front door, and from the window saw him descend the steps unsteadily. Then he stepped in front of Miss Cad's house and whistled hideously!

In a flash a window in Miss Cad's house went up, and Mrs. Higgins saw her beloved rector prance madly on the sidewalk.

"Steve, *Steve!*" screamed the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne.

The next moment a figure in a red smoking-jacket, with wildly disordered hair, tumbled down Miss Cad's steps and fell into the Rev. Mr. Browne's arms, and the pair leaped madly up and down, while the Rev. Mr. Browne beat his companion on the back with his immaculate silk hat.

The world swam before Mrs. Higgins's eyes.

V

THERE had not been such excitement in Naumkeag society since the Marquis de Lafayette had danced with Naumkeag's belles in Winthrop Hall over a hundred years ago. At first there was a dreadful rumor that the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne had gone violently insane while making a parish call on Mrs. Higgins. Fifteen ladies called on Mrs. Higgins at once, but Mrs. Higgins was sick abed. As for the Rev. Mr. Browne, he had disappeared completely. At night the windows of Miss Cad's second-story front room shone brilliantly and sounds of revelry came out. In the course of the next day or two several

strange young men made their way from the railroad station to Miss Cad's door, and a prominent parishioner of St. Xantippe's, passing the house at a late hour, thought he recognized the voice of his rector insisting that he was the son of a gambolier.

Within three days Naumkeag society was on the verge of nervous prostration, when the Rev. Mr. Browne suddenly appeared again, a trifle pale and a sleepless look about his eyes, but without a suspicion of dementia. And thereupon Naumkeag society had a genuine sensation.

S. D.; Stephen Duff; Captain Stephen Duff, Royal Chinese Navy, commander of one of the Emperor of China's war-ships in the battle of Yalu; a cutlass slash on his left cheek from the hands of a Japanese boarder; a body simply filled with Japanese bullets and fragments of shells and other warlike material, which pained him in warm weather and made him limp all the time; and finally, distant cousin and heir of Miss Cad, and chum of the Rev. Mr. Browne at Harvard ten years before.

The young ladies of Naumkeag had never heard of anything half so romantic. Their hearts swelled with pity at the Japanese bullets and shells. Afternoon walks invariably led past Miss Cad's front door, and sympathetic if hasty glances were directed toward the second-story front windows. Then Mrs. Grayfoil, whose originality and daring constantly set Naumkeag aghast, invited the Rev. Mr. Browne and his friend to dine; and although there was a shadow of disappointment that the stranger wore a swallow-tail instead of yellow and purple silks, and ate with a fork instead of chop-sticks, the young ladies who graced the occasion pronounced him, in that delightful diction peculiar to the daughters of Naumkeag's exclusive families, "simply grand."

But Mrs. Higgins, who had been convalescent, took to her bed again. To her mind her new neighbor sug-

gested nothing more or less than a Chinese laundry sign swinging from Miss Cad's doorway. Mrs. Higgins could have traced the development of family plate cream pitchers from Charlemagne to the present day, but she was not interested in Chinese history. And Miranda said, "How perfectly fascinating!"

VI

Two weeks before the next Assembly it was certain that Captain Duff, Royal Chinese Navy, was to be present, and the flutter of excitement among Naumkeag's impressionable young ladies grew first to a breeze and then to an adorable little gale.

Such glowing reports of these proceedings were brought by Miranda to her mother's chamber that Mrs. Higgins finally sat up and spoke at length on the frivolity of Youth and the decay of Naumkeag society generally. Miranda, by way of reply, suggested a new party gown, whereupon Mrs. Higgins recognized the call of duty, subdued her nerves by sheer force of will, and the night of the Assembly found her in the row of patronesses, somewhat wan, but with five of Miranda's eight bouquets in her lap, and sustained by the joy of the general who is on the field.

Directly across the hall sat Miranda. Mrs. Higgins knew she was there because at rare intervals, through the interstices of attendant cavaliers, she caught glimpses of her gown or her flowers.

With the strains of the first waltz Mrs. Higgins felt an inward glow. Miranda was dancing with family plate and pedigree self-imported from Boston for the occasion. Mrs. Higgins knew about this importation. It had been preceded by a considerable florist's stock of violets, and showed extremely interesting symptoms of aphasia under Miranda's eyes.

Mrs. Higgins gazed about her indulgently. After all, Naumkeag was truly a delightful place. She liked the simplicity and respectability writ-

ten on the faces before her. The little ambitions and jealousies and victories of these people appealed to her as at once precocious and charming. Wherever her duty to her daughter was to call her, she should always look back on this Arcadian environment with genuine affection. Perhaps even a tear might fall on the family plate with a crest and an H intertwined. . . .

At this point Mrs. Higgins's wandering thoughts were brought abruptly back. The waltz had come to an end, but there was an extraordinary flutter in the air. Mrs. Higgins swept the faces of the patronesses on each side of her. Their eyes were fixed on the group of young men about the door. She looked toward Miranda. The Boston representative of family plate and pedigree sat gazing at her like a man who has forgotten something and is hungry. Miranda appeared wholly oblivious of the young gentleman; there was a flush on her cheeks and her eyes were also riveted on the crowd about the door. Then the flutter increased perceptibly. A strange young man who limped slightly and bore on his left cheek a long scar had advanced on the arm of an usher and was bowing low before the patronesses.

The next instant Mrs. Higgins's eyes grew stony, and Miranda plunged hastily into conversation with the young gentleman of pedigree. For, after a moment's consultation in the centre of the hall, the usher and the young man made straight toward her, and the young man was making another excellent bow. Then Naumkeag society gasped a little in spite of itself, and Mrs. Higgins grew faint with mortification. For Miranda held out her hand in the most informal fashion in the world.

"I am very glad to meet you," she said, "because we are next-door neighbors."

The young man held the hand for an instant and bowed again. There was no doubt he bowed presentably.

"Not only next-door neighbors,"

he answered, "but we have met before, you know."

Miranda looked up wonderingly.

"Before?" said she. "Why, how dreadful! I don't remember at all. Was it in Naumkeag?"

The young man regarded her for a moment gravely.

"No—not in Naumkeag," he said —"and yet not so very long ago."

He showed embarrassment, and hesitated as if searching his memory for a face.

Miranda laughed.

"You have forgotten, too," she said, skeptically. "There is no use trying to remember, because you are mistaken."

"You are right," said the young man. "I was mistaken. It was not you at all. Have you ever," he continued irrelevantly, "seen the day break on the Eastern Sea?"

"Of course not," replied Miranda, decidedly. Then quickly she half-rose from her seat to make him a little curtsey, and immediately buried her nose in her bunch of roses. "Will you have a flower?" she asked.

The young gentleman of pedigree had departed, and Miranda made a place beside her. Three or four late-comers approached in turn to ask for a dance, or a part of a dance, then or thereafter, only to retire with Miranda's regrets that she was engaged ahead as far as she could count.

"They told me beforehand there was not the slightest hope," said the young man, "but there is still the pleasure of asking. May I have the honor of a waltz?"

"Which?" asked Miranda, with much innocence. "The second or the fifth?"

"Both," he said, stoutly.

"With pleasure," answered Miranda. She was deep in the arrangement of her bouquets. "How funny!" she said. "I saved out those dances for fear I should be tired, and didn't think of them again until the instant you asked me. But if you tell a soul I shall be disgraced."

It was, perhaps, a coincidence that Captain Duff should put Miranda and

her mother into their carriage at the end of the evening, while various covetous young gentlemen saw the office well discharged. When Miranda said good-night she gave him her hand through the carriage door and asked him not to take cold, for a heavy snow was falling and the young man's head was uncovered.

On the way home Mrs. Higgins, who had become immovable early in the evening and rigid toward the end, preserved a bolt-upright attitude of disapprobation that she felt spoke louder than words. After a short distance traversed in silence Miranda sighed pathetically, but not a muscle of Mrs. Higgins relaxed. Mrs. Higgins could be a Spartan mother on occasion. Miranda sighed again.

"I hope that young man will not take cold," said Miranda. "He is perfectly lovely."

Whereupon Mrs. Higgins promptly abandoned her policy of silence. If, an hour later, when Miranda crept into bed, she was unaware of the duty of a young lady to herself, her family, her position in the world, to things present and to come; if she had not definite ideas on such topics as Propriety, Dignity, Circumspection, the Eternal Fitness and Unfitness of Young Men, the blame could be laid to no lack of emphasis or directness in her mother's remarks.

VII

As Miranda was coming out of her front door the next morning Captain Duff was just descending his front steps. Miranda's face assumed an expression of severity, but when they had met on the sidewalk and in some unaccountable manner shaken hands, he was walking up the street beside her, inquiring politely concerning her and her mother's health after the late hours of the night before.

"I am going out to the toboggan club," said Miranda. "The tobogganing will be fine to-day. Have you seen our toboggan slide?"

"I have not," replied Captain Duff,

"but I should like to. Might a stranger stand somewhere in the snow and look on?"

"The idea!" said Miranda. "You will be very welcome, and I will lend you my toboggan."

For several blocks they talked of the party and the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne, the only topics in Naumkeag with which the young man was as yet provided. Finally they left Hazel street for the deeper snow of the turnpike.

"It is very kind of you to let me come," said the young man.

"Oh!" said Miranda, with dismay.

"Is the snow too deep for you?"

"No, but if you think it is kind to let you come you must go back. That would be too bad. Do you really think so?" Her face was full of concern. "I forgot to tell you," she continued, "that I have been instructed to be polite to you when we meet but not to encourage you to become better acquainted. You must promise, whatever happens, not to wish to become better acquainted."

He glanced swiftly at her and away.

"I am afraid it would be safer for me to go back at once."

"It might be safer," said Miranda, "but it would be horribly impolite for me to *think* of such a thing. Remember, I am to be polite to you."

"I will remember," said the young man; "polite but not kind. Can you?"

"The little house on the hill," said Miranda, "is the toboggan club."

When Miranda reached home to a late luncheon that afternoon, having parted from her neighbor at her front door, she hastened to inform her mother of the demands that common civility had made on her. Accidents, chance encounters, it was plain, were to be expected. Who could have foreseen that he would be on his front steps when Miranda came down hers? There was nothing difficult in that, however. One had only to be polite—polite and distant—as Miranda had been. Besides, the whole matter was exceedingly tiresome, since she

had little interest in it one way or another.

Mrs. Higgins was pleased with these sentiments as indicating both Miranda's sensible nature and her careful maternal training. On the following day, which was Sunday, she saw them put to a practical test. For Captain Duff, resplendent in silk hat and frock coat, appeared when St. Xantippe's was dismissed, cut out Miranda before Mrs. Higgins could get a gun to bear, and saw her home.

The following Tuesday Miranda ran across him down town, but the meeting being nothing more than a skirmish she did not deem it necessary to mention it at home. Thursday she encountered him again. The poor young man had never seen the East India museum; could Miss Higgins spare a few moments, as a matter of politeness? The few moments stretched to an hour apropos of a model of a Chinese junk and an original idea of Miranda's. The idea was that her politeness might be turned to practical account in the way of acquiring useful information.

"Tell me," she commanded, "something about the battles you were in against the Japanese. Were they very dreadful?"

Captain Duff laughed.

"There was only one real battle," he said, "but that was very dreadful—especially for the Chinese, because we were soundly thrashed."

Whereupon she required of him the whole story of that disastrous battle, with every particular of how his own ship went down.

"How awful!" she said at the end, "and how brave! How could they sink you when you were so brave?"

There were young gentlemen who would have given all they hoped to possess to see the light that shone in Miranda's eyes.

"There was little to choose in bravery," said Captain Duff, "between Japanese and Chinese. I saw a Japanese gunner with half of his head shot away step back and hand his lanyard to a comrade before he

tumbled over dead. And when they boarded the *Chih Yuen* the first man killed was a Japanese sailor who took a cutlass stroke intended for his officer and saluted as he went down."

Miranda shivered. She had never heard anything so appalling, so wondrous, so beautiful.

"When you come to fight men like that," said Captain Duff, "take care."

"I will," assented Miranda, hastily.

On Friday Miranda found him at the toboggan club. Having established a precedent, she felt obliged to offer him the use of her toboggan, which he accepted. Miranda was on the toboggan.

When Sunday came round again it appeared that Mrs. Higgins had made some plans of her own. After service Miranda came down the aisle under close convoy of her mother and Miss Augusta—Mrs. Higgins on the starboard, Miss Augusta to port. Whereupon Mrs. Higgins had the pleasure of seeing Captain Duff, after an inspection at long range, go about and disappear below the horizon.

Two weeks later Miss Augusta made a call on Mrs. Higgins. As an intimate friend, Miss Augusta wanted to know some things—some things that if Mrs. Higgins did not know it was just as well she should know why she did not know.

For instance: Why was it that Miranda was gaining a reputation in Naumkeag as a naval expert?

("My dear—!")

Wait a moment. Why is she generally credited with a knowledge of such matters as that a twelve-inch gun is not a gun twelve inches long?

("My dear, what do you mean?")

What can it profit a young girl scarcely out to have it rumored about her that she is conversant with dynamite torpedoes and trajectories, and can pronounce the name of the Chinese High-Admiral?

("My DEAR—!!!")

Why is a certain Boston young gentleman of pedigree an object of anxiety to his family and of commiseration to his friends? Why, in short,

is the most absorbing piece of gossip in Naumkeag the fact that one cannot stir abroad without running into a certain pair—none other than Miranda—Miranda of the house of Higgins—and—that—Captain—Duff?

Miss Augusta did not reach the bottom of the front steps before Mrs. Higgins appeared in Miranda's room. That night there was to be an Informal Party, and Miranda was sitting at her dressing-table with five bouquets before her. There were pink roses and white roses, and lilies-of-the-valley, and the customary florist's stock of violets. In her hand Miranda held three large Jacqueminots, which she alternately sniffed and rearranged. Of the other flowers she appeared somewhat oblivious; the considerable stock of violets stood pathetically on its head in one corner, and the card that had accompanied it lay on the floor.

"Miranda!" said Mrs. Higgins.

Miranda jumped and looked at her mother. Mrs. Higgins had a world of things to say, but she hesitated. There was a spot redder than usual in each of Miranda's cheeks, and in her eyes was something Mrs. Higgins had never seen there before and that made her feel queer. Somehow Mrs. Higgins felt a vague desire for delay.

"I see you have some more roses," she said. "Who sent them?"

"Er—Captain Duff," answered Miranda. "He says will I accept them for being the politest person he ever saw."

Mrs. Higgins sat down hastily.

"Isn't he a very impudent young man," continued Miranda, "and stupid—not to know that mere politeness is not an invitation to send roses?"

Miranda looked at her mother with the appealing air of one who has been misunderstood. The red spots in her cheeks were redder than ever, and otherwise, from forehead to throat, her face was pink as a pink rose.

Mrs. Higgins went to Miranda's dressing-table and straightened the

violets with fingers that shook. Something told Mrs. Higgins that this was not the time for speech. It whispered also in her ear of certain observations to be made at the party that night—observations the mere thought of which made Mrs. Higgins feel ill. Miranda was still busy with the Jacqueminot roses; she did not appear vividly aware of her mother's presence.

VIII

It was plainly the voice of Truth that had whispered in Mrs. Higgins's ear. Matters for observation crowded on her from the time she and Miranda set foot in Winthrop Hall. Miranda was so long in the dressing-room that Mrs. Higgins left her and waited at the door. When she finally appeared, of her five bouquets she carried in her hand one Jacqueminot rose.

"Why," said Mrs. Higgins, "where are your flowers?"

Miranda caught her breath in dismay.

"Oh," said she, "I have forgotten them. What shall I do?"

"I suggest your going back into the dressing-room after them," said Mrs. Higgins. "I will wait for you here."

Miranda did not stir.

"Oh," she said, with a horrified air, "it is too dreadful!"

"My dear," said Mrs. Higgins, with impatience, "*what* is the matter with you?"

"They are not in the dressing-room," said Miranda. "They are at home on my dressing-table. I entirely forgot them."

Mrs. Higgins gazed at the rose in her daughter's hand for a moment with compressed lips. Then she raised her eyes to Miranda's face. As she did so the other two Jacqueminots dawned on her view. One nestled in the lace at Miranda's breast, the other was fastened in her hair.

"How mortifying," said Miranda, with a little frown, "that I should

forget those lovely flowers! Oh, there is Captain Duff."

This was only the beginning of Mrs. Higgins's observations. Before supper she saw Miranda dance a part of a dance with the young gentleman of pedigree from Boston and twice with Captain Duff. How Miranda found it possible to give two dances to Captain Duff when each of her other dances was divided among several claimants surpassed Mrs. Higgins's comprehension.

Captain Duff took Miranda to supper. He wore a large Jacqueminot rose in his buttonhole, and the rose that had been in Miranda's gown was missing. Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, —such was the name of the young gentleman of pedigree and family plate—took Mrs. Higgins to supper. While Mrs. Higgins ate he spoke to her of many things.

Mrs. Higgins was not a woman for delay. Miranda did not appear on the floor the first dance after supper, and Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, was sent after her post-haste. He found her in a corner of the deserted anteroom, propped round with silk pillows, with Captain Duff before her. He was leaning toward her, speaking. Miranda's head was bent so low that her face was hidden, but she seemed to answer occasionally in monosyllables. Then, of a sudden, she raised her eyes and let her companion look into them. Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, from where he stood at the door, also caught a fleeting glimpse into those eyes. He felt as if someone were squeezing his heart like a wet sponge. Miranda and her companion had not seen him at all. He went away softly, and expressed his regrets to Mrs. Higgins that Miranda was nowhere to be found. Which proves that pedigree and family plate are not all of the excellent things young gentlemen may inherit.

Mrs. Higgins was instantly on her feet, but at that moment Miranda appeared on Captain Duff's arm. Morning and evening stars were shining in Miranda's eyes. Mrs. Higgins was

going home, and her daughter's surprised and anxious inquiries received little reply. In the dressing-room and in the carriage Mrs. Higgins was granite and ice. Half-way home, Miranda, who had been drawing long breaths, suddenly threw herself into her mother's lap in a tempest of weeping.

"Repentance," said Mrs. Higgins to herself, grimly.

Half an hour later Mrs. Higgins, in dressing-gown and slippers, entered Miranda's room. Miranda sat mopping her eyes with her pocket handkerchief. She had not so much as taken off her gloves.

"I am ready," said Mrs. Higgins, seating herself with severe dignity, "for an explanation."

Miranda rolled her handkerchief into an elaborate ball, with which she dabbed her eyes vehemently.

"I am waiting," repeated Mrs. Higgins.

"There is nothing to ex—p—lain," said Miranda, "except that—he—he—said—that he—loves me."

Mrs. Higgins turned pale and opened her mouth rather wide.

"He—did not intend to—tell—me," continued Miranda, "but he said—he couldn't help it. Oh, he has been in love with me for a long time—long before he even knew there was such a person. He had wandered over South America—and Europe—and Asia—and the Philippine Islands, and never knew why—until—until—he saw me—then he said he knew—what he had been looking for—all the time."

Miranda blinked at her mother and wiped her nose tragically.

"Will you be so kind," asked Mrs. Higgins, "as to mention the name of this—tramp?"

Miranda regarded her mother bewilderedly, as if the idea that there were various young gentlemen in the world were quite novel. Then a little flush came into her face and she looked at the floor.

"Captain—Duff," she said, very softly.

The little clock on Miranda's mantel ticked off twice a dozen seconds. Mrs. Higgins gazed at her daughter. Miranda continued to look at the floor. It was as well that she did not see her mother's countenance.

"He is coming to-morrow to—to tell you," said Miranda. "Oh, he is very brave. He says he would rather face a submerged mine or—or a—a automobile torpedo. But he is not in the least *afraid* to come—"

Then Mrs. Higgins spoke.

IX

AT half-past three the next afternoon Captain Duff called on Mrs. Higgins. Mrs. Higgins was not at home. The next afternoon he called again. Mrs. Higgins was indisposed. The afternoon following he called again. Mrs. Higgins was very much engaged and begged to be excused. Captain Duff's business was very particular; would not Mrs. Higgins be so kind as to send down word when she would be able to give him a few moments? Mrs. Higgins regretted that she must ask to be excused indefinitely.

After this a week passed. Miranda was not seen outside of the house except in her mother's company. There were dark rings under her eyes and a droop to her mouth that was heart-rending. The shutters on Miss Cad's house were once more closed and no sound came from within. The Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne disappeared from the world again, but this time it was well known that he was on a spiritual mission. Finally came the report that Mrs. Higgins and her daughter were about to take a trip abroad, *for a change of air*, and that Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, would join them in Paris. About the same time, it was said, Captain Duff was to depart for Cuba to fight for the insurgents. The young ladies of Naumkeag had never dreamt of anything so romantic or so sad. They would not have made an even trade for *omeo and Juliet*. The sympathy of

maturer ladies in society went out, of course, to Mrs. Higgins.

On the day before Mrs. Higgins and Miranda were to start for New York Captain Duff made another call on Mrs. Higgins. His face was haggard and he held his shoulders very square. Across the card he presented at the door ran this legend:

Captain Duff, who leaves Naumkeag to-morrow, earnestly entreats a few moments' conversation with Mrs. Higgins.

While the maid carried this epitome of humility and hopelessness up stairs Captain Duff stepped into the parlor. In one corner sat Miranda. Her eyes were red and her hair was all sorts of ways over her forehead. She sprang up with a little cry, and Captain Duff took both her hands in his. Tears and smiles so mingled in Miranda's eyes it was a miracle there was no rainbow.

"I had given up all hope," said Captain Duff, looking into them.

The smiles fled suddenly and there was only an increasing mist of tears.

"There is no hope," said Miranda. "We are going away—to-morrow—abroad. It may be years before we come back again. I may never see you as long as we live. There is my mother coming down stairs. I wanted to tell you—" grief and love's smart and young despair choke one so—"to tell you—that—I shall never—marry—"

At this moment Mrs. Higgins entered the room.

"Good-bye—" said Miranda.

"Miranda!" said Mrs. Higgins.

"—forever," whispered Miranda.

"You will go to your room immediately!" said Mrs. Higgins.

She turned to Captain Duff. Captain Duff stood like a tin soldier.

"Madam—" he began.

"Allow me to show you to the door," said Mrs. Higgins. "Pray do me the favor not to force your way in again."

"Madam," said Captain Duff, "I assure you I am an honorable man."

"I have not the least doubt of it in the world," said Mrs. Higgins.

"At present, however, I am much occupied with other matters."

Mrs. Higgins went toward the front door.

"Madam," said Captain Duff, remaining stock still, "I love your daughter—"

"What impertinence!" interrupted Mrs. Higgins, pausing at the parlor door. "You will go at once."

"Mrs. Higgins, you must listen. You have a kind heart, for you are her mother—"

"This is intolerable," interrupted Mrs. Higgins. "Being so honorable a young man—" Mrs. Higgins smiled sweetly—"it will not be necessary to remind you that one can call on the —police."

There was a moment's pause, during which Mrs. Higgins continued to smile. Then Captain Duff bowed and went through the hall and out the front door without another word. He looked like a drowned man.

X

MRS. HIGGINS lay in bed, but she could not sleep. A smile hovered over her lips and a hundred rose-colored ideas trooped through her mind. How many mortals have dared to teach a new stitch to Fate? And had Mrs. Higgins not found the very yarn of Fate in a snarl? Had she not unraveled it and crocheted it in a pattern of her own?—a pattern so elegant, so complete, so firmly woven that Fate herself might attempt in vain to tamper with it?

Up to within half an hour Mrs. Higgins's meditations had been punctuated by the sobs that came through the open door from Miranda's room. In Mrs. Higgins's mind there still lingered pleasantly the spectacle of the white-faced young man who had stumbled out of her front door that afternoon. To-morrow that objectionable young man would be hastening into oblivion; to-morrow Mrs. Higgins and Miranda would be on their way to Southampton and Paris.

Expectation was a dazzle. To begin with, there was Mr. Bowdoin

Bowdoin, 2d, his devotion and his family plate. Still, Mrs. Higgins was not sure. She would have a look at the nobility and family plate of the Old World. Was it for naught that those importunate dreams of hers had grown in vividness and reality night after night until, for the past week, even in her waking hours, she could feel the very touch of silverware under her hand? Was it for naught that so many a noble crest had flashed like the Pleiades above the Higgins H? Mrs. Higgins smiled an indulgent smile. She would allow the future to answer. She had no desire to destroy the consecutiveness of time. . . .

Even now, as Mrs. Higgins closed her eyes, she could recall those precious pieces, their every curve and angle and festoon. . . . She could almost see them. . . . She could see them. . . . She could . . . touch them—teapots—goblets—cream pitchers—and—other—things. . . .

Mrs. Higgins opened her eyes wonderingly. Miranda was bathing her mother's temples and holding smelling-salts to her nostrils. Then, suddenly, Mrs. Higgins shuddered.

"Has it gone?" she whispered.

Miranda jumped and drew her nightgown closely about her.

"Has what gone?" she demanded.

"The—the—Miss Cad," said Mrs. Higgins. "She was standing by the gas jet."

Miranda squealed and climbed on the bed.

Mrs. Higgins sat up and gazed about shakily. The brightly burning gas seemed to revive her somewhat. She looked at the clock. It was a quarter to three.

"I think," she said, "I have been dreaming."

"You were screaming," said Miranda, "and when I came you had the bedclothes drawn up tight over your head."

Mrs. Higgins seemed lost in thought.

"It was very peculiar," she said, reflectively. "She was standing by the gas jet. I saw her as plainly as I

see you. Then she pointed at the wall. . . ."

Mrs. Higgins paused, her eyes fixed in a vacant stare. She stared so long that Miranda reached out a trembling hand and shook her by the shoulder. Mrs. Higgins came to herself with a start.

"Don't be silly," she said, and straightway got out of bed and put on her wrapper and slippers. Then she went over and tapped gently at the wall just below the gas jet. Her hands shook, but there was a glow in her eyes.

"Mamma," pleaded Miranda, "what are you going to do?"

Mrs. Higgins regarded her daughter somewhat blankly.

"I don't know what I am going to do," she said, and came over and sat down on the edge of the bed.

"My dear," said Mrs. Higgins, "listen to me. You know very well that every night for months past I have dreamed of one thing—family plate. Sometimes with a crest, sometimes with only an H, sometimes with a crest and an H intertwined. Very well. For the last half-dozen nights those dreams have been more vivid, more real than ever before. To-night I dreamed the same dream again. There was a whole set of silver, and on each piece a crest and an H. And then, all of a sudden, this—this—Miss Cad was standing by the gas jet. . . ."

"Ugh!" shuddered Miranda.

"She stood there and began to make a noise, a sort of wailing noise, and I thought she was going to speak, but—she didn't speak—at first—she—she laughed. . . ."

"Ah-h-h-h," gasped Miranda.

"It was a very peculiar laugh. She opened her mouth several times, as if about to say something, but every time she—choked and—shook. And then, all at once, she did speak. She pointed at the wall over there, just below the gas jet, and said, 'Dig—dig—dig.' And the next thing I knew you were here."

Mrs. Higgins patted her forehead with her handkerchief.

"It was a very funny dream," said Miranda, tremulously.

"Miranda," said Mrs. Higgins, in a solemn voice, "I have felt positive those dreams meant something—only I supposed it was something abroad."

"I don't know what *you* mean," said Miranda.

"I mean this," said Mrs. Higgins. "To-night—the last night we are to be here—the dream changes. The family plate is the same, the crest is the same, but Miss Cad comes and points at the wall—at a certain place in the wall. . . . Well—"

"Well?" said Miranda, staring.

"Well," continued Mrs. Higgins, "Miss Cad knew this house for seventy years—and Miss Cad knew me."

Mrs. Higgins got resolutely on her feet, and going over to the fireplace seized the shovel.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Miranda, white as a sheet.

"I am going to see," replied Mrs. Higgins, "whether there is anything hidden in that wall."

"Mamma," implored Miranda, "what are you thinking of? It was nothing but a dream, and nobody believes in dreams. Please come to bed."

"This was not a dream," said Mrs. Higgins, approaching the gas jet. "It was *dreams*, and very extraordinary dreams. My dear, it is out of the question for me to leave this house to-morrow with the feeling that there may be a lot of family plate buried in my own bedroom wall. Perhaps the whole thing is simply absurd, but it will be a very simple matter to find out."

Mrs. Higgins turned and applied herself to the wall with a grim determination. The coal shovel, however, did not prove effective. Her efforts scarcely defaced the wallpaper. Vigorous blows were out of the question, for fear of arousing the household.

"Miranda," said Mrs. Higgins, "I want you to take the poker and come here."

"Mamma," moaned Miranda, "please wait till morning. It is too cold, and I am afraid. Something dreadful will happen."

Mrs. Higgins did not reply. Miranda was too evidently forgetting that dreadful things lost courage when they tried to happen to Mrs. Higgins.

"Besides," continued Miranda, "it would not be your silver. You would not have inherited it."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Higgins, without pausing; "will you be so kind as to inform me whose silver it would be? And if I have family plate on my table, will you tell me just who is to say whether I have inherited it or not?"

Miranda got up, and putting on her wrapper and slippers, joined her mother with the poker. Mrs. Higgins shut her teeth and gouged. A little hole began to show in the plaster and grow. Finally a large cake of plaster fell away.

"There," said Miranda, with a great sigh of relief, "nothing but a brick wall."

"Exactly," replied Mrs. Higgins. "If the wall is a thin one we shall very soon see what is inside of it."

Mrs. Higgins took a nail-file from her dressing-table and attacked the mortar between the bricks. Miranda, at her mother's direction, followed suit with a button-hook and the air of expecting to be interrupted shortly by the destruction of the world. The mortar proved too hard for such delicate implements, but there was a stand of arms hanging just outside the door. Mrs. Higgins got a pike-head, which she gave to Miranda, and took a short battle-axe herself.

A few minutes later there was an excavation between two bricks sufficient for the point of the poker, but all the prying they were capable of failed to move a brick. Then followed a long siege of scraping, digging and prying. Their hands were scratched and sore, and Mrs. Higgins's bedroom resembled the ruins of a miniature Pompeii.

At last, just as four o'clock was striking, a brick loosened and tumbled out on the floor. After that there was little trouble. Another brick loosened, then half a dozen more. They lifted them out carefully.

Suddenly Miranda shrieked softly and pointed her finger. The last thrust of the pike-head had revealed a black hole on the further side of the wall.

XI

CAPTAIN DUFF and the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne sat in the second-story front room of Miss Cad's house in the early hours of morning. Captain Duff sat stiffly with fixed jaw and lustreless eyes. The Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne was beside him, his hand on his knee, speaking in a low voice. A half-filled trunk stood in the centre of the room and all sorts of articles littered the tables and chairs. With few changes the scene might have served as a model for one of those pictures that represent the last hours of the condemned.

After a while Captain Duff got up and proceeded with the packing of the trunk. He worked with the swiftness and precision of an adept. In a short time the tables and chairs were cleared and he entered the closet at one side of the room. For a few moments he could be heard fumbling round. Then, suddenly, he came out, closed the closet door softly behind him, turned down the gas, and going to a table drawer, took out a brace of revolvers. The Rev. Mr. Browne was at his side in a moment, and Captain Duff spoke to him shortly in an undertone.

"You will do nothing reckless," said the Rev. Mr. Browne, taking up his hat.

"Have no fear," replied Captain Duff. "Two men in front of the house and two behind, and the sergeant on the front steps."

The Rev. Mr. Browne hastened out quietly. Captain Duff examined the charges of his revolvers, and reopening the closet door, tiptoed within.

XII

"Put your hand through," said Mrs. Higgins, "and see if you --- feel anything."

Miranda backed away.

"Ugh!" she said; "I couldn't!"

Mrs. Higgins stood her battle-axe against the wall, got down on her knees and inserted her whole arm. Immediately she brought out a small silver bowl and handed it to Miranda. Another, exactly like it, followed; then four curiously shaped goblets, very heavy and beautifully carved. Miranda could scarcely take the things from her mother for trembling. Mrs. Higgins was apoplectic.

"Well," said she, "what have you to say now? Look; is there anything on them?"

Miranda took up the articles one after the other and scanned them closely.

"There is something engraved," she said, "but I can't make it out. It seems to be in a foreign language."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Higgins. "Let me see one of them."

But Mrs. Higgins examined the inscription in vain.

"It does not seem to be exactly like the dream," she said. "Let them be for the present. They will be plainer by daylight."

She put her arm through the hole again and struggled in the darkness beyond.

"There's something too large to get through," she gasped. "We must enlarge the hole."

"Mother dear, *don't*," pleaded Miranda. "It is too much like a haunted cave. Something dreadful will happen."

Mrs. Higgins pried away more bricks, until the hole was nearly two feet in diameter, then reached through and brought out a great silver bowl, something like a punch bowl, but overlaid with wonderful *repoussé*, and so heavy she could hardly lift it.

"There's more," said Mrs. Higgins, in an ecstasy, plunging in again. "I can feel something—it—"

Mrs. Higgins shrieked and struggled from her knees toward the bed. Miranda screamed and retreated to the sofa and continued to scream. There was a dreadful noise on the other side of the hole. Several bricks tumbled out on the floor, and imme-

diate from the outer darkness the figure of a man in a red smoking-jacket, with a revolver in each hand, plunged headlong.

"Stephen!" cried Miranda, and fled into her room.

"I—beg—pardon," said Captain Duff, and stood transfixed.

Mrs. Higgins, on the bed, became consecutively an incarnation of horror, alarm, amazement, indignation. Then she became herself again.

"Oh!" she cried. "Indeed! Burglary! Sir, do not attempt to intimidate me with those pistols. We shall see," making toward the servants' bell, "whether there are States' prisons."

Captain Duff placed himself mechanically between Mrs. Higgins and the bell.

"Will you allow me one word?" he asked.

"Not a word," returned Mrs. Higgins, promptly.

"You have mentioned burglary. Will you tell me how you come to be in possession of my silver?"

"*Your* silver!" exploded Mrs. Higgins. "Do you dare! Young man, I dug that silver from my own bedroom wall."

A light broke in Captain Duff's face.

"Ah," he said, "through your wall, *out of* my closet. A Chinese silver service, as you may have observed. It was given me three years ago by the late Admiral Ting Ju Chang."

"What?" asked Mrs. Higgins, sitting down and turning chalk white.

"Madam," said Captain Duff, sadly, "no one could regret this more than myself."

"It is of course possible," said Mrs. Higgins, "that there is a misunderstanding. I dreamed there was silver hidden in the wall, and quite naturally dug it out. Since you say it is yours you may take it and retire."

She waved her hand with a dignified motion. There was perchance a quaver.

"Must I indeed explain?" asked Captain Duff. "The—police—are—below."

"Sir!" demanded Mrs. Higgins, "do you dare to insinuate——?"

"Oh, madam!" said Captain Duff. "Having been sent from headquarters with orders to make a thorough investigation, the sergeant in charge insists on viewing the premises. It will simply be necessary for Mrs. Higgins to tell the story of her dream—to the—proper authorities."

A hideous nausea came over Mrs. Higgins. Mrs. Higgins relating dreams to the *proper authorities!*—with a Chinese silver service, acquired from a neighbor's closet, to refresh her memory! Mrs. Isaac Newton Higgins, who had been going over to have a look at the nobility of Europe; who was to have been met by Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, in Paris; formerly a caryatid of Naumkeag society! Naumkeag society! Mrs. Higgins could feel the ravens picking her bones.

She walked over to Captain Duff and laid her hand on his arm.

"This is very—unfortunate," she said, "and—absurd, but it can, of course, be explained—and arranged—quietly. I may have been somewhat hasty toward you in the past, but—you are a gentleman. You will not permit such a—an annoyance to come on a family of such position as mine. You will find a suitable explanation for those creatures and see that they are dismissed at once."

Captain Duff gazed at Mrs. Higgins for a moment, then through and beyond her, like a man who has suddenly come on a mirage.

"There is one way——" he said, slowly.

"Of course," said Mrs. Higgins, with a wan smile.

"—with your consent."

"Mr. Duff," demanded Mrs. Higgins, "is this the time for formality? I beg you will get rid of those creatures at once."

Captain Duff went swiftly to the hole in the wall and called softly. A voice answered which sent a chill down Mrs. Higgins's spine—the voice of the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne. Captain Duff put his head through and spoke briefly. Mrs.

Higgins could not hear what he said, but there were immediately hasty footsteps, followed by the shutting of a door.

"What have you done?" cried Mrs. Higgins, the perspiration coming out on her forehead.

"Believe me," said Captain Duff, "there is not a moment to be lost."

"Tell me——"

"I hesitate——"

"Speak!" cried Mrs. Higgins.

"It is perfectly proper," said Captain Duff, "that there should be a newly begun passageway from the house of a mother-in-law to that of her son-in-law. It is perfectly natural that, being alarmed during the night, she should take a silver service from her son-in-law's closet into her own room for safe keeping—that her son-in-law, alarmed in turn, should send too hastily for the police. A somewhat unusual incident, but—strictly a family affair—that is, if she is a mother-in-law."

"I think I do not quite understand," said Mrs. Higgins. "I am not a mother-in-law."

"Madam," said Captain Duff, "I love your daughter."

Mrs. Higgins turned purple.

"Quite enough," she commanded. "The matter is at last quite plain. An impudent trick! Miserable young man——"

Captain Duff went to the window, and putting aside the curtain beckoned Mrs. Higgins to look out. Two policemen, in the glare of the electric light, were gazing up expectantly.

"Two more are behind the house," said Captain Duff, "and the sergeant is on the front steps."

Mrs. Higgins returned mutely to the edge of the bed.

"Madam," said Captain Duff, gently, "there is no trick."

"We are going abroad to-morrow," said Mrs. Higgins. "On our return, if you wish to call——"

"I am grateful," said Captain Duff, earnestly, "but I fear the gentlemen below would never wait so long."

Mrs. Higgins clutched the bedclothes and rocked to and fro.

"Ah," said Captain Duff, continu-

ing to look out, "they are crossing the street."

"I can see," said Mrs. Higgins, "that I may have been unjust. For the present—our trip abroad—shall be—postponed. To-morrow, I—and—my daughter—will be at home. If—in time—"

"From here to the city clerk's house, by bicycle," said Captain Duff, taking out his watch, "is two minutes. Two minutes more to get the city clerk out of bed, four to write the license, two to return. Our messenger has already been gone nine and one-half minutes. In thirty seconds, therefore, we may expect him."

"Messenger!" exclaimed Mrs. Higgins. "License! Will you be so good as to enlighten me?"

Captain Duff bowed gravely.

"Appreciating the danger of delay," he said, "I took the liberty of sending, immediately on obtaining your consent, for a license—a-marriage license."

Mrs. Higgins rose to her feet and immediately sat down again.

"My consent! You—have—dared! You have the impudence—to hope—that this—infamy—will be successful! Very well, sir! We shall see! Will you leave this room instantly or shall I ring for assistance?"

"It will not be necessary to ring," said Captain Duff, retiring toward the hole in the wall. "It was only by the promise of a satisfactory explanation that the sergeant has been induced to wait so long."

"One moment," cried Mrs. Higgins, hastily.

Mrs. Higgins shut her eyes. The *proper authorities*—Naumkeag society, babbling, gabbling, jabbering—in short, the deep sea; she opened her eyes, and there, before her, was the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne.

"We are very fortunate," said Captain Duff. "Mr. Browne has just returned—with the license. I have taken the liberty of explaining your wishes to him in full, and he has consented that there shall be no delay."

The Rev. Mr. Browne approached and seemed to speak appropriately,

but Mrs. Higgins gazed before her as one in a sleep, and heard not.

Captain Duff had crossed the room and knocked at Miranda's door. It opened in a flash. Miranda, with tumbled hair and flaming cheeks, but dressed from top to toe, confronted him. She could not have been far.

"Oh," cried Miranda, "do you think I would marry you in such a fashion?"

He leaned toward her and spoke very fast and very low. The next instant she was past him and had her head in her mother's lap.

"My child," murmured Mrs. Higgins.

A touch on her hand; he had raised her to her feet . . . and led her forward. . . .

"Dearly beloved—" said the Rev. Algernon Maynadier Browne.

Mrs. Higgins rose and stood at her daughter's left hand unsteadily. Strange sights and sounds filled her mind. She heard again the weird merriment of that apparition in her dream, choking, convulsed, and—was there a note that Mrs. Higgins had not perceived before?—a mocking note? *mocking?* Mrs. Higgins saw for a moment the goodly stretch of Beacon street, the family trees; Paris, and Mr. Bowdoin Bowdoin, 2d, waiting, waiting; crests and coats-of-arms, pedigrees and family plate, illusive, dream-like. Then the Chinese silver service glared indelicately in the gaslight.

"Dearly beloved—"

Up and down, the length of Hazel street, Naumkeag society lay in the heavy sleep of early morning. But no fear it will not awaken. Already the lights in Mrs. Higgins's chamber paled, and from Naumkeag Willows and Marblehead the dawn leaned out like a princess from a tower.

Oh, shame! From Miranda's eyes tears popped forth, trembled on her lashes, rolled down her cheeks. And straight from Miranda's heart there rose a sigh, as if someone had opened the gates of Paradise a little way and a breath had blown out.

For Miranda was a foolish, sentimental young thing.

THE MIRTHLESS PRINCESS

(A GRIMM TALE MADE GAY)

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

IN days of old the King of Saxe
Had singular opinions,
For with a weighty battle-axe
He brutalized his minions.
But what aroused within his breast
A rage well-nigh primeval
Was most of all his daughter, dressed
In fashion medieval.

In all her life she'd never smiled;
Her sadness was abysmal.
The boisterous monarch found the child
Unutterably dismal.
He therefore said the prince who made
Her laughter from the shell come,
Besides in ducats being paid,
Might wed the girl, and welcome!

The king's announcement quickly drew
Nine princes in a column,
But all in vain; the princess grew,
If anything, more solemn.
One read her "Innocents Abroad,"
The next wore clothes eccentric;
The third one swallowed half his sword,
As in the circus tent trick.

Thus eight of them into her cool
Reserve but deeper shoved her.
There was but one authentic fool,
The prince who really loved her!
He'd alternate between the height
Of hope and deep abasement;
He caught distressing colds at night
By watching 'neath her casement.

He said the bitter things of love
All lovers, save a few, say,
And learned by heart the verses of
Swinburne and A. de Musset;
And did what I have done, I know,
And you, I do not doubt it;
Instead of bottling up his woe,
He bored his friends about it!

This attitude his wished-for bride
 To silent laughter goaded,
 Until he talked of suicide,
 And then the girl exploded.
 "You make me laugh, and so," she said,
 "I'll marry you next season."
 (Not many people who are wed
 Have half so good a reason!)

MORAL: The lover's like the owl,
 Comic, because so grave a fowl.
 The owl appears to give the cue:
 We learn from him, to wit, to woo!



WITH THE COFFEE AND CIGARETTES

A WOMAN'S woman is only raw material. A man's woman is the cultivated variety.
 You'll notice a girl never screams at the second kiss.
 If hammocks could talk ears would grow on trees.
 It is bad form for a woman to laugh at her husband's jokes. Besides, she has heard them before.
 Silk stockings cover a multitude of shins.
 There's a divinity that shapes the ends of every girl with pretty feet.
 The prodigal son comes home in a cab nowadays, and charges it up to the family.
 The father of liars took the first cold bath.
 A kiss through a veil is like a cherry without a cocktail.
 The girl who tells you she knows how to steer the automobile knows a good deal more than that.
 Look out for the man with a dimple in his chin, if you are a girl. He may get away.
 Eve discovered the first garter snake.
 A cigarette is the cheroot of all evil.
 Few people make love at breakfast.
 "The Love Letters of a Liar" should have been called "The Love Letters of a Man." Simplicity is the finest literary style.

DOUGLAS DUNNE.



THE FAVORITE PLACE

MRS. DORCAS—While in the country I suppose you were engaged most of the time in boating?
 Miss DORCAS—Oh, no, ma. It was while I was in the hammock that I became engaged the most times.

IN THE MATTER OF A WATCHMAN

By Guy Somerville

... but he, being enamored withal of another damsel, is fain to resist all her importunity. Finally he yieldeth.
—*Il Decamerone di Giovanni Chinone.*

“ **I** WONDER,” said Mona, reflectively, “ why men *always* want to do those things.”

Mona sat on one end of the sofa and I sat on the chair opposite. This I must say in justice to Me.

“ Do they always?” I queried.

“ There never was an exception,” said Mona, positively.

“ I have known some men,” I ventured, “ who *never*—”

Mona shrugged her pretty, white shoulders.

“ They couldn’t,” said she. “ They couldn’t—or they did not dare.”

I carefully avoided Mona’s eyes.

“ But they always wanted to,” said she.

“ Perhaps they did,” I assented.

“ In nine cases out of ten,” Mona went on, “ it was because they did not dare.”

I continued to avoid the eyes.

“ Which is foolish,” pursued Mona.

“ It’s awfully warm,” I protested. “ Besides, they may merely be being true to another girl.”

“ I don’t really believe,” said Mona, fetchingly, “ that men are ever thoroughly true to another girl.”

“ But they are to you?” I suggested, brightly.

Mona extinguished the nearest lamp.

“ We shall not need it after your last,” she said, smiling.

I grew very uncomfortable. I am not used to girls. And Mona is ultra.

“ We were speaking,” said she, “ of other girls.”

“ And thinking,” I rejoined, “ of you.”

Mona smoothed her hair.

“ Am I different?” said she.

“ You do not even resemble,” said I.

“ You’re a nice boy,” said Mona.

“ I must be going now,” I ventured.

“ You are the only man,” said Mona, “ whom I can make behave.”

I felt ruffled.

“ I don’t see—” I began.

“ Oh, the others all have to be taught. But you—you are natural.”

“ But the others must behave—in the end,” I said.

“ Oh, yes,” said Mona, hastily. “ But it is so hard to teach them. That is why you provoke me so.”

I puzzled over this.

“ I can see that now,” I said, finally.

“ Exactly,” said she. “ You see, it is such fun to teach. And they take it—many of them—so hard.”

“ Yes,” said I. “ I remember taking it hard once—from another girl.”

“ Be careful of that chair—it’s going to break,” said Mona, making room on the sofa.

I took another chair.

“ Mr. Armitage,” said Mona, suddenly.

“ Miss Wheelock?”

“ Were you ever in love?”

I reflected.

“ Is that when you have a headache, a sore throat and a rash?”

“ I don’t know about the sore throat,” said Mona. “ But you always have a headache, and always are rash.”

"I had it once," I said, satisfied.

Mona left the sofa and stood beside my chair. I dared not rise.

"At that time," said Mona, "didn't you want to—?"

"At that time," I said, solemnly, "I did."

Mona twirled the matrix that she wore on her second finger.

"Did she let you?" said she.

"She had nothing whatever to say about it," said I.

Mona cried out, triumphantly:

"That's just the trouble! She should have made you mind. She did not, and the result is that now—"

"That now—?"

"You are no fun," she finished, "for any of us other girls."

"Oh," said I.

"Because you sit there and think that if you wanted to you could do anything you please."

"I don't," I said, horrified.

"But you can't," said Mona, earnestly.

"I never said I could," I pleaded.

"You did," said Mona, tranquilly; "you said just that."

There could be no question that Mona loved me.

"Did you ever smoke?" I asked, irrelevantly.

Mona blushed a little angrily.

"A cigarette—once or twice—just to see."

"Never a cigar?"

"Of course not!" indignantly.

I pointed to a long cigar on the rug almost at her feet.

"Whose is that?" said I.

Mona looked uncomfortable.

"That is—a man's," she said. "He was here before you came."

"He is still here," said I.

"Why, how did you know?" said Mona, opening her eyes very wide.

"Because his coat is on the hall table, and a hat that is too small for your father and too big for your brother."

"It's simple, after all," she said, breathing easily again.

"I don't know," I said, somewhat puzzled, "that it is so simple."

"Why not?"

"The place where we found the cigar—"

"Yes?"

"Is that where—?"

Mona smiled mischievously.

"Foolish! No, that isn't where."

"How did it get there?" I queried.

"It fell, I suppose," said she.

"When he was standing up?" said I, incredulous.

"Just as likely," said Mona, "as if he had been sitting down."

"But," said I, "he might have been bending."

Mona drew herself up.

"My dear Mr. Armitage!" said Mona.

"Where is he now?" said I.

"When you came," said Mona, "he said he would go up and talk for a while with father. Because, you see," she added, negligently, "if he had stayed here he should have had to go first."

"Oh," said I. "Whereas—"

"Certainly," said Mona. "Whereas."

"Who is this man?" said I.

Mona pursed up her lips. Which is very dangerous.

"You aren't fit to know," said Mona.

"You won't tell?" said I.

She shook a pretty head.

"Then," said I, decisively, "I don't believe there is any man."

A shrug of fair shoulders.

"I don't care," said Mona. "You needn't believe."

"Of course," said I, "if there is no other man, I don't have to go first."

"His name," said Mona, "is Charley Masterson."

"Much obliged," said I, rising. "I believe he's in love with my sister."

"It isn't anything in the world to me," said Mona, "if he is."

I drew on my coat and laid my hand on the front door. Mona was wholly charming.

"Are you going?" said she.

"You are deucedly good-looking," I said, reluctantly.

"Do you still feel," said she, "that you ought to be true to the other girls?"

"It isn't plural," I pleaded.

"Then it is very singular," said Mona.

I walked waveringly out on the stoop.

"Aren't you going to lose your pin?" said Mona.

I sighed. It was a pretty pin.

"I'm afraid I am," said I.

"Oh, thank you so much!" said Mona. "It is *dear*."

"It was eighteen fifty," I admitted, off my guard.

Mona frowned.

"You should never," she said, reprovingly, "you should never, *never* tell the values."

"I don't," I said. "That was the price. Nobody knows the value, except the jeweler."

"I always did like curly hair," said Mona, irrelevantly.

"What a perfect night!" said I.

"I wonder if the watchman is looking?" said Mona.

I started violently and almost fell down the stoop.

"Let's go in again," I suggested, weakly.

"On account of the watchman?" said Mona, innocently.

"I can't help it if I have," I said, in desperation.

"What would she think?" whispered Mona, diabolically.

"You will never tell?" I said, with much fear.

"The watchman—" began Mona.

"The watchman *non est*," I interrupted.

"What language do you speak best?" said Mona, admiringly.

"The universal language."

"Volapük?"

"No—this kind."

"Dear me," she whispered, "what a good accent! Don't go."

"I must," I said, hurriedly.

Mona raised her eyebrows.

"There—you have again!" said she.

"I don't care," said I.

"Good-night," said Mona.

I stood on the bottom step till she closed the door. Well? . . . She was beautiful and clever and very rich, and she certainly loved me. And I wasn't really engaged.

I drew a silver dollar from my pocket and twirled it absently. It is good to be a bachelor, and to digest one's food, and to sleep soundly o' nights and take the water as it comes in the morning. But if it was necessary to be anybody's in particular, why not Mona's?

The silver dollar slipped from my hand and rolled lightly into the area and under the iron door. On such haps do the destinies of men and nations hang.

I went into the area and reached under the iron door. As I did so the front door, above me at the top of the stoop, opened. And there came forth a youth and a maiden.

"Has he gone?" said the youth—and it was not Charley Masterson.

"Yes, at last," said Mona.

A horrible suspicion seized me that they were talking of me.

"He stayed the devil of a time," said the youth.

"It was awfully hard to make him go. I did everything," said Mona, helplessly.

Decidedly they were talking of me. If so I ought not to listen.

"What do you and he talk about?" said the youth. "I mean, when you're alone."

"Oh, we talk art," said Mona, vaguely.

I really would not listen any longer.

"When we are married," said the youth, positively, "I won't have him about the house. I know him."

"The pup!" I ejaculated, silently. It might be my duty to listen, if only for the purpose of making sure that he did not deceive Mona.

"Don't be cross, dear," said Mona.

I felt ruefully for my scarf pin.

"He tried to kiss me," said Mona.

There really did not seem to be any further point in listening.

"He shall answer for it to me," said the youth.

If he only would ask!

"I wonder if the watchman is looking?" said Mona.

And then I leaned for support against the area door. I am leaning against it still.

AUGUST TWILIGHT

AT eventide the dusky murmurs fall—
Oh, the honey of the kisses of thy mouth!
At eventide the ships beyond the wall
Go slipping to their harbor in the South.

The drowsy bee his evening vesper hums,
The frog begins to croak his night alarms,
The cricket in the sleepy meadow strums—
Oh, the sweetness of the clinging of thine arms!

Oh, the wonder of the beauty of thine eyes!
Oh, the splendor of thy youthful strength and grace!
Oh, the glory of the love that never dies!
Oh, the tenderness that glorifies thy face!

At eventide the eyes of heaven shine,
And o'er them flit the clouds in trailing veils;
The little buds go nodding on the vine
That over Lethe spreads its leafy sails.

Each little bird is dreaming in his nest,
Nor in our dreams are thou and I apart;
In all this world of sleep there is no rest
For the longing for the beating of thy heart.

VENEVILL BRAY.



RATIONAL REVENGE

JJUDGE—Why did you sell this old countryman a gold brick?
BUNCO STEERER—I boarded at his place all Summer, your honor, and it was the only chance I had to get square with him.



AT BAILEY'S BEACH

THE ugly duckling is most in the swim.
Those who go into the water most boldly have the least sand.
The “warmer” the costume, the less it protects from Father Neptune's chilly embraces.
The older the girl, the more anxious she is to be taught how to float.
While there are many good fish in the sea there are more on shore.
There is always a roar when the swells go broke.

G. L. H.

THE SUNFLOWER GIRL

By Justus Miles Forman

LIVINGSTONE came on board almost at the last moment, and so had no chance to cast an eye over his fellow passengers as they embarked. He had been staying with the Leith-Holdens down in Chester, and had come up on an afternoon train that left him barely time to drive to the landing stage.

He saw his luggage into the hold, and then followed his steamer box and suit case to room 103. Room 103 was nearly full of a huge Englishman, red as to face and yellow as to hair, who flourished in one hand a bath sponge the size of a football and in the other a suit of appalling pink pajamas. "Thank the Lord he isn't French or German!" breathed Mr. Livingstone, gratefully, and proceeded to stow away his effects.

He inquired as to what hour of the morning the Englishman meant to tub, fixed his own time a half-hour later, changed his hat for a cap of shrieking plaids, and went on deck.

His roommate followed in a moment, and they stood leaning over the rail and gazing down into the liquid mud of the Mersey.

"Who was responsible," asked Livingstone, "for that charming paraphrase, 'The quality of Mersey is not strained?'"

The Englishman laughed. "Don't know. Fancy it's about as old among the Liverpool people as the shipping itself. Not bad, either."

It was already growing dusk as they floated down the river, and a bugle from the companionway amidships tooted cheerfully "The Roast Beef of Old England."

As Livingstone squeezed into his revolving chair at the table he became conscious of a most wonderful mass of very smartly coiffed hair at his left, shining, silken, wavy black, with unexpected bits of red here and there, in the high lights.

The head turned, and there were equally wonderful eyes, big, rather too big, and gray, and there were dark shadows under them, as is often the case among brunettes of a certain type.

"Oh, I don't know," smiled the young gentleman, exultantly. "I think I'm glad I came. Why, hang it, she's a beauty! She's a picture!"

Then he cast about for something to make an excuse for talk.

"She doesn't want salt," he said, "or pepper, and she's got an indecent amount of pickle already. If she'd only drop something I might pick it up, and she'd have to thank me."

Finally he settled on the flower. The girl had not changed her black traveling clothes, and wore, pinned to the front of her jacket, a small sunflower.

"Your sunflower," said Livingstone, "makes me hesitate to believe that I've really left England. I have been living for three weeks in a sort of jungle of sunflowers, for which some friends of mine down in Chester have developed a sudden and violent passion, and with which they have completely hidden their house and garden."

The girl lifted the drooping head of the flower with very nice, long, slim fingers, and laughed.

"This has come from farther than Chester," she said. "It was grow-

ing only yesterday morning in a dear old *jardin bosquet* in Quimper. It's all I have left of Quimper, and I think I'm going to cry right here."

"Why, then it isn't a sunflower," declared the man. "It's a *tourne-sol*, and that's much nicer. I used to be fond of Quimper and all that coast. Please," he demanded, gravely, "will you give me your *tourne-sol* when it is dead? I should like to press it in the back of my watch for the sake of Quimper."

The girl laughed. "If you will promise to do that I will give it to you without fail," she agreed. "Won't you show me your watch? It must be such a nice, large, comfortable watch."

"It is a comfortable watch," he said. "It's not one of those aggressively prompt and accurate watches that are always giving you incipient heart disease by reminding you that you are late for something important. My watch may have infirmities, but I love its infirmities. We are so much alike."

The girl looked at him with amusement and with a glint of interest in the big gray eyes.

"It must be very pleasant," she smiled, "to have a watch so sympathetic and feeling as that. It is certainly well trained. Is—is your conscience equally considerate?"

"More so," said Livingstone, firmly. "It has been with me longer than the watch, and there is nothing it would not do for me—nothing."

The girl laughed.

The large woman with beetling brows who sat across the table from Mr. Livingstone gave a little gasp and pressed a startled hand to the front of her bodice.

"There was a distinct motion," she said, truculently, to the table at large. "I felt it plainly. If it continues I shall be exceedingly ill," and she fixed a baleful eye on Mr. Livingstone, as if she suspected him of maliciously rolling the ship.

There was the faintest possible uplift as the ship's nose met the swell at the mouth of the river, the slight-

est possible heave, the breathing of a giant asleep.

The large person across the table added another hand to the front of her bodice.

"There!" she said, in a husky roar, and lowered malevolently at the fascinated Livingstone. That young gentleman met the delighted eyes of the Sunflower Girl and turned pink.

"I think I'll go on deck," he said, hastily; "I want to smell the sea. We're out of the river now." And he fled to his stateroom.

"Curse that old dragon!" he complained, in an indignant growl. "She quite turned my appetite with that eye of hers. None o' my fault if the tub pitches a bit."

He put on a heavy white sweater and a yachting jacket, and filled a pipe. Then he went up on deck.

It was a clear, fresh night, keen with the salt, delicious coolness of the North Atlantic in Summer. Livingstone hung over the rail and watched the white uplift of the water at the vessel's quarter. The wind beat against his face, clean, chill, blood-stirring, till he gasped for breath.

"Jove, that's something like!" he cried, as he turned to watch the deck. Then someone spoke beside him.

"Isn't it glorious?" said the girl.

Livingstone swung about toward her.

She had tied a veil about her hair so that it should not loosen in the wind. She wore no hat, but a long gray ulster that fell from her chin to the deck in straight lines, and she had turned the collar up about her neck. She looked extremely well.

"I am glad I came!" said Mr. Livingstone, with fervor.

He did not realize that he was speaking aloud. There was a little smothered sound from the girl. It might have been a laugh.

"The night hides your gorgeous eyes," he said—inwardly this time. "They're just two great black shadows. One feels what is there, though. And your nose is perfect. I approve of its evident desire to turn up a bit."

It ought to turn up—a bit. And that ridiculous little curled upper lip that overhangs the lower one!—why, you've a Rossetti mouth, a perfect Rossetti mouth! If it weren't for your square jaw—and I like that, too—you would be the Blessed Damozel—no, I think the *Donna della Finestra*—all over again! You're really much nicer than either of those ladies, though," he concluded. "Perhaps you aren't so poetic, but you'd be a lot more fun," he decided, somewhat vaguely.

"I asked you a question," said the girl; "I asked you if it isn't glorious. You are not polite."

"I was considering," he retorted, "just how glorious it is. I should like to tell you, but you see I've a working knowledge of only three or four languages. Besides," he added, inwardly, "you mightn't like it." And aloud: "But since that is beyond me, shall we walk? It's the proper thing to do, on shipboard, after dinner—or after breakfast or luncheon, or any other time."

The girl laughed. "Yes, we must walk," she agreed; "but before we do that I've got to wish on the first star. I saw the tip of the Great Bear's tail when I came on deck, so it shall be that one."

Then she repeated, very solemnly, three times that classic little rhyme:

"Star light, star bright,
First star I've seen to-night!
Wish I may, wish I might,
Have the wish I wish to-night!"

and turning round once, threw a kiss to the star.

"Now I'll get the wish," she declared. "Are you so satisfied with the world that you don't wish anything?"

"Well," he said, "I own that I'm very much satisfied just now. However, there might be a few frills sewed on it," and he gravely performed the incantation.

"And now," declared the Blessed Damozel, "you shall give me your arm and we will walk."

They tramped miles round and

round the narrow deck in spite of Mr. Livingstone's frequent and grave attacks of heart failure and paralysis of the knees, when, on rounding the deckhouse, forward, the force of the wind threw the girl against him and forced her to cling to him with all her strength. He soon learned that an arm judiciously disposed about her waist at such crises was both efficacious and, to himself, delightful. He cherished vague hopes that the promenade would last till morning.

"I think I'm a bit tired," said the girl, presently. Livingstone's heart sank. So they went aft and stood by the port rail, where the deckhouse sheltered them from the sweep of the wind, and watched the great black veil of smoke overhead that streamed back toward England.

"I shall be glad to see America again," said Livingstone, slowly. "It's years since I left there, but—well, I hated to come." He pointed out over the heaving blackness to the southeast. "Paris is over there," he said, wistfully, "*my* Paris. Jimmy Rogers and Simmons are sitting out in front of the Source or the Pantheon, on the *Boul' Miche'*, drinking things, and Johnny Gurd and Hopper, and all of them; and the *cafés chantants* in the Champs Élysées are full of people and music and lights, and the boulevards are—bah!" He laughed and shook his head. "If it weren't for you, I think I should jump over and swim back."

"*Merci bien!*" said the girl. "Don't let me stop you. Perhaps I'd like to go along—and Finisterre is over there, too," she went on, pointing, "not so far as Paris, *my* Finisterre, all cliffs and sea and sky and little queer houses; Quimper and Quimperlé and Concarneau. And over this way, if you want people, there's St. Malo. Oh, let's go back!" She tried to laugh, but there were tears in the laugh, and it faltered and broke.

Livingstone reached for the small gloved hand that lay on the rail and pressed it. Then, "Look, look!" he said. A rim of light, huge, incandescent, sanguinary, pushed up above

the sea's edge to the east, and an orange path shot over the waves to the very side of the vessel.

"Oh, oh!" said the girl, with a little gasp. "It's a dream moon! It's too wonderful to be a real one. Haven't you ever had dreams of moons like that?—great, enormous, blood-red moons that rise out of nothing and hang looking at you, and frightening you, and that finally drag you off to dream places where you have the most unthinkable adventures and wake up shivering? It's frightening me now!"

The moon was clear of the sea's rim, and hung, crimson and portentous, over the black waste. A wandering little remnant of cloud drifted across the huge face and seemed to contort it in a gigantic grin.

Livingstone reached again for the small gloved hand on the rail, and it closed on his.

"It doesn't look frightful to me," he said. "It looks rather friendly, rather as if it would like to do us a good turn. See it grin? That's the best it can do by way of a smile, you know. It is a well-meaning grin. It's saying, 'You poor young things! Here you're going clean across the sea to America, and neither of you wants to go a bit. You want to come back and play—you both know how to play so well! I'd really like to help you, really!'"

The girl gave a little, low, nervous laugh, and the hand in Livingstone's stirred and seemed to nestle.

"See!" she whispered, "it has offered us a way back. We could walk over that yellow path straight to Brittany. Surely it wouldn't let us through into the water."

"We'll go!" cried Livingstone. "It would be sinful not to take such a chance. We're both sorry we came away. And now let's settle just where we're to go. Where do you say?"

The girl stared out at the crimson moon with half-shut eyes. Little curls of hair, loosened from the veil blew across her face, white in the darkness, and she smiled.

"Morlaix," she breathed; "Morlaix on the cool, clean north coast. Blue sky and gulls overhead and blue water out at sea, with a creamy froth of foam under the cliffs, miles and miles of heather stretching inland, and a keen, clean, sweet wind blowing always, blowing all your troubles and bad temper and little meannesses away. Ah, you and I on the cliffs of Morlaix, with the wind in our faces and the sea splashing, splashing down below!"

"I've something better than that," said the man. "Morlaix is good, but I've a better; a little island in a sapphire-blue lake, the merest bit of an island, a tangle of shrubbery and flowers and stained marble. It is terraced to the south, seven terraces, and on the top one there's a half-ruined villa. No one has lived in it for years. And on the north side there's a wilderness of garden full of red and white flowers, and great purple blossoms that cling to a broken fountain and to moss-grown nymphs, armless and noseless. When you've pushed through the flowers you come to the wall that rises from the water's edge, and up beyond you, over the hills at the head of the lake, there's a huge glitter of white, the snow peaks from the Simplon to Monte Rosa. They don't look a mile distant. There are singing birds in the ilex trees and the acacias, and a tattered white peacock marches up and down the garden wall, and screams maliciously at any boat that comes near. There's where we'll go," he said, nodding gently. "We'll buy my little island from those Borromei chaps. We'll build up the villa where it is falling to pieces and we'll stain it lemon color or pink. We'll hire a gardener and a woman or two from one of the towns, and we'll leave word with the boatmen at Pallanza and Stresa and Baveno that they mustn't row any more tourists to our island. Tourists, indeed! And there we'll live—with the big, fierce flowers in the garden and the peacock and the blue sky. In the evenings we can sit in the garden and watch the snows to the north

turn pink and blue like mother-of-pearl, and the water of the lake grow gray. And when it's dark the music will begin at the big hotels over on the Punta della Castagnola. And when you grow tired of having just me about—" the girl's face turned up to him and she smiled, while the hand in his stirred again and nestled—"why, then we can be rowed over to the Castagnola or to Baveno, and hunt up the people we know in the hotels there. Do you like my island?"

"Like it?" whispered the girl, "like it?"

"And then, in October, when the winds from the snow begin to grow cold, we'll shut up the villa and give it our blessing and run away south to Rome, and south still to Naples—we can loaf about there in Sorrento and Pozzuoli and Capri and Ischia—and east to Brindisi, where we'll catch a P. and O.—and there's all the big, gorgeous East to pick and choose from till April, when we can come back to Maggiore."

The girl bent her shoulders over the rail and laid her cheek on the two hands there, hers and his.

"Need I tell you how sweet it would be?" she breathed.

"Would?" he demanded.

The cheek nestled closer.

"Will," she whispered. "Ah, so sweet! Ah, so beautiful! The happy dreams one had when one was a girl in school all come true! The castles one builds and paints of lonely evenings turned to gold and marble—real castles! But oh, aren't you afraid? What do you know about me? You've seen me during one dinner, and talked to me about a sunflower. Maybe I'm an adventuress. Maybe I'm a Boston schoolma'am out for a lark. What if, after we had raced back to Brittany, to Paris, to Lago Maggiore, you found I'd a nasty temper and a shrewish disposition, and was given to tippling and wore false teeth?"

She looked up with round eyes.

"Why, then," declared Livingstone, cheerfully, "I should beat you—wife-beating isn't seriously regarded on

the Continent. It is considered hygienic. I should beat all the nasty temper and shrewish disposition out of you."

She giggled delightedly. "I should adore beatings!" she cried. "I've never been beaten in all my life. Of course I was spanked—frequently."

The man laughed. His face was turned out to sea and for a long time he made no sound, only there was a steady little smile on his lips.

The hand recalled him presently.

"Tell me what you're thinking," said the girl; "you aren't polite."

He shook his head and drew a long breath. "What's the good of telling?" he said; "and some of it couldn't be told. I was thinking of the life a certain worthless young chap is looking forward to. I was thinking of seeing those gorgeous eyes of yours and that beautiful face over the coffee every morning, turning pink at first, when you had to ask me how many lumps of sugar. I was thinking of your coming to show off wonderful new gowns and mysterious hats to a simple-minded male being who wouldn't appreciate the gown or the hat at all, but who would be starving to take into his arms what the gown held and the hat covered—to kiss the warm mouth, to crush it with kissing, and the roseleaf cheeks, and the black lashes that are altogether too fond of hiding dear eyes. I was thinking how proud he'd be, this worthless young man, when people pointed after her at Homburg and Baden, and in Paris and Nice and Rome, and scraped up acquaintance with him in the smoking-room to get an introduction to her. I was thinking how he'd be happiest of all sitting beside her or at her feet in their island garden under the acacias, holding her slim, cool hands and telling her just how beautiful and unspeakably lovely she was. I was thinking—oh, thinking of all the beautiful little intimate things that can't be told and that come along day by day in a big, strong love. What's the use of trying to tell?"

The small, gloved hand quivered.

"I've wanted," cried the girl, softly, "oh, all my life I've wanted to be made love to like that—" The voice came in little gasping half-sobs, "and nobody ever did it. Ah, why didn't you come sooner? *Why* didn't you?"

Someone from within opened a port of the over-heated music-room, and at once the chatter of voices and the sound of laughter came out to the two on deck, with a rush of warm air and the scent of roses. Someone was at the piano singing the "Star of My Soul," from "The Geisha:"

"Dream, oh, my dearest, till we meet once more;
Day dreams of happiness again in store,
Dreams of a future that our fates may hold,
Passed in a wonderland of love untold."

It was a contralto voice, that tone which words are so utterly powerless to describe, a voice like a 'cello—that makes one want to say "chocolate," if only it were not ridiculous.

"Passed in a wonderland of love untold—that's it," said the girl, softly. "Don't you suppose I can picture what it would—will be? Don't you suppose I can shut my eyes and imagine the simple-minded male being taking what the gown held and the hat covered into his arms and kissing her lips, crushing them with kissing? Don't you suppose I can call up a thrill from head to foot when I think of it? I should hate the simple-minded male being if he only said the gown was pretty and the hat was smart. That would be too much like real life, not our moon country, not our island dreamland at all." She threw a kiss with her free hand to the moon, small and silver and high overhead now. "You're a dear moon!" she cried, with a little, low laugh, "even if you do turn the head of a silly little girl and a silly little boy and set them to talking madness."

She turned about, still laughing softly, and pressed her hands over her eyes, as if she were waking from sleep.

"Moonshine and madness, *mon*

ami!" she said. "Ah, but a heavenly moonshine and a sweet madness—strangely sweet! I sha'n't forget it quickly. What solemn nonsense we've been talking—what atrocious nonsense!" She shook a humorously reprobating head at the silver moon. "You're an untrustworthy old party. You put queer notions into young folks' heads. A sweet madness," she sighed, "though very mad. Wouldn't it be beautiful if—ah, that great, big, unsurmountable 'if'!—if that path of light out yonder could only be walked on, if only we knew something about each other, if—oh, if the thousand other big obstacles could be sunk in the sea? But we're well away toward America, my friend—and we've never even been introduced to each other!"

"That last," admitted Mr. Livingstone, "is an unsurmountable barrier, I grant you. As to the others, madness has been known to become permanent, and—you forget that we haven't touched at Queenstown yet."

"Queenstown!" she cried, softly, "Queenstown! Why—why—we could go—back—yet!"

The shaft of light from the open port struck full across her face, startled, amazed, full of a certain unwilling joy, full of a deprecatory laughter. The great gray eyes stared at Mr. Livingstone.

"We can get off at Queenstown tomorrow," he said, eagerly, "and go back on a Holyhead boat. The other 'ifs' aren't worth considering. Good God! don't you know, don't you realize to the very bottom of your heart that we're made for each other? Does it take two such as we are a year to find it out? Are you going to stand for conventions? Come back with me! Chuck up everything and come back with me! Look at me, dear. Are you afraid to trust yourself to me? Look at me. Can you find anything in me but worship of you?" He took her hands again and they lay shaking in his. The big eyes were upon him, half-fearful, half-full of a frightened joy. "If the moon has turned us mad, why, mad we'll be all our lives!"

Oh, it is a sweet madness, you have said it! Dearest, come back with me from Queenstown to-morrow, and we'll live out all we've dreamed to-night—and more."

"Dream, oh, my dearest, till we meet once more—"

sang the great contralto from the music-room—

"Day dreams of happiness again in store,
Dreams of a future that our lives may hold—"

and from the bridge deck there came six bells.

"Oh, it's absurd!" cried the girl, pulling away her hands. "Don't make it hard for me, dear boy, not any harder!" She laughed a bit hysterically. "We're both moon-mad yet. If it's any comfort to you to know, I'd give half my life to run away with you to-morrow Come, it's six bells, eleven o'clock, and I must go to my bed. I'll see you to-morrow. We shall both be in our right minds then. Good-night—and—yes, you may kiss me."

Then when he had set her down she stood trembling a little and gasping for breath, but after she had started away toward the cabin she came back a moment and put her hands on his arm. "Promise me something," she said, softly; "promise me that—that whatever happens after to-night, you will always think of me as I have been in these two or three hours."

Then she went below.

Livingstone lighted his pipe with "flamers" four times, then, his abstraction continuing, he threw it overboard, under the impression that it was a cigarette; and next to an old 'varsity sweater bearing a white Y it was his dearest possession, too.

The next morning he was down for an early breakfast. The girl's chair was vacant. The one to its left was also empty.

"Wonder who belongs there," said the American.

"No one in it last night. Queenstown arrival, probably."

He loafed anxiously about the deck for an hour. Then he saw her coming from the other end of the ship.

"Who's she picked up now?" he growled. "Villainous looking little beggar! By Jove, it's Rochemont-Sorel! The swine! What in heaven's name is that little beast doing here? He's married, too. I read it in the *Figaro* a month ago nearly. I say, I'll have to give that girl a friendly word in the ear. She mustn't be seen about with him."

The girl was rather pale, and there were black circles under her eyes.

"White nights," commented Livingstone. "'Tisn't becoming."

She saw him when only a few steps away. Her face went perfectly white, and at first she made as if to pass hurriedly. Then she paused, halting her companion with a touch on the arm, and turned toward the young American with a sort of desperate defiance. Her eyes were miserable and pleading.

"Good-morning, Mr. Livingstone," she said; "will you let me present you to—to my husband, le Comte de Rochemont-Sorel? My husband was ill last evening—which was not at all gallant of you, Henri, on your wedding journey."

Mr. Livingstone put out a hand behind him swiftly and caught at the rail. His eyes were on those of the Comtesse de Rochemont-Sorel. Then he bowed politely.

"Ah, but M. le Comte and I have met before," he said. "In Mentone, was it not, M. le Comte?"

M. le Comte de Rochemont-Sorel turned a deep rich purple. He made certain choked sounds, presumably of uncontrollable joy at the *rencontre*, but manifested a strong inclination to continue his walk.

Mr. Livingstone bowed again profoundly. "I wonder at what time we reach Queenstown?" he said, looking into the eyes of the Comtesse de Rochemont-Sorel. Then as she turned away he hummed a certain beautiful little air from "The Geisha" called "Star of My Soul."

AFTERGLOW

IF only at the last your tears may fall
 Upon my upturned face of helpless clay,
 Unfearing, I shall tread the hidden way
 And follow where the mystic voices call.
 If only at the last you deem me fair
 And whisper tender words—ah, I shall know!
 Beyond the Wintry branches, leafless, bare,
 My longing sight awaits the afterglow.

If only at the last a little while
 You kneel beside me in the darkened room,
 Amid the drifted white of Springtime bloom,
 It seems as if my silent lips must smile.
 If you should lay rosemary 'midst my rue
 And kiss my empty hands, and softly hold
 My fingers in your own, I'd dream of you,
 And all my saddened skies would turn to gold.

If only at the last your dear lips say:
 "I love you, sweet," as in the yester-years,
 I think I shall be glad for all the tears
 That fill and blind my pleading eyes to-day.
 Yea, in my sleep I'd turn to kiss again
 The lips that, quivering, prayed above me there;
 My doubting heart shall find its healing then,
 If only at the last you seem to care.

If only at the last a little love
 May follow me beneath the shielding sod,
 And that be yours, I shall not ask of God
 A truer way His saving grace to prove.
 A-dreaming where the wind-swept grasses grow,
 That last "good-night" I shall forever hear;
 And my face wear the light of afterglow
 If only at the last you love me, dear!

MYRTLE REED.



NO IMMEDIATENESS

HE—Do you believe in love in a cottage?
 SHE—No, indeed, I don't.

HE—How about love in a palace?

SHE—Oh, George, this is so sudden!

HE—Well, it won't be—if we've got to wait till I earn the palace.

IN REGARD TO MADRAS

By H. Knapp Harris

IT was August in Calcutta. In a low bamboo chair Miss Flossy lounged supinely, nibbling daintily that favorite Anglo-Indian confection, almond toffee. She wore a long, loose diaphanous dressing-gown, billowy with lace, that itself seemed possessed of the ineffable languor of the East.

"Calcutta in August comes about as near my idea of Dante's picnic grounds as any place I ever expect to find *short* of that region," she laughed, lazily, holding up a damp handkerchief that she had been applying to her pretty, flushed face. "It's three whole months since I came to this 'cradle of the race,' Aunt Nellie, and I've never yet told you a word about my trip over. I've fished out my notebook to-day—I actually kept one, you know—and I'm going to read you—"

"Spare me! in mercy spare me!" laughed the dark-eyed, piquant little woman who lounged beneath the creaking and flapping wings of the *punkah*. "Haven't I crossed three times?" She yawned helplessly behind a white hand. "What have I done to deserve this?"

"But I want to tell you what we did at Gibraltar and Ceylon and Madras. I—I *must* tell you about Madras, Aunt Nellie. I've tried before, but—"

"Well, don't I know all about Madras?"

"N—no, I don't believe you do," stammered Flossy, her face suffused with a sudden rush of color that could not be attributed to the heat. "You see we—well, it was quite out of the ordinary what we did at Madras."

"The very same stereotyped things, probably, that all tourists do. Gazed with Occidental eyes at Oriental wonders, and gushed over your first sight of palms and palmettoes. Do hand me a fan, Flossy; I'm simply grilled. I do believe that stupid *punkah wallah* has gone to sleep again. The *punkah* seems to be at its last gasp. He usually ties the string to his big toe, but I suppose he's too far gone now to even wiggle that. Well, if you're bound to read that notebook—" She yawned again and looked resigned and hopeless. "Of course, there was the usual heterogeneous collection of people on shipboard that one always finds on a *Peninsular and Oriental ship*," she continued. "There was the captain, in white duck and a pith helmet and roaring good spirits. And several flirtful wives whose husbands are in the Service, returning from Home. Always begin Home with a capital letter in India, Flossy. Then there was a sprinkling of callow subalterns, who begin to look white about the mouth the first day out. And weren't there a bride and groom?"

"Well, rather! There were no less than three newly married couples. And every one of them was in the honeymoon state of beatitude that borders on imbecility. They sought out all the secluded corners on the hurricane deck, and were so in love that the artificial palms in the cabin shriveled up if they sat too near them. Then there were the cute little brown *punkah wallahs*, with red sashes tied round their pouchy, aldermanic figures, that always made me think of chocolate glacé. Then there were the jolly Jack tars and the picturesque Las-

cars. And the spinster missionaries—my! what a big instalment of spinster missionaries there was going over! What a tiresome life—poor things!—to sit under a bread-fruit tree and distribute marshmallows and tracts to the heathen! One of them had the berth above mine; and all the way over my frivols and chiffons kept getting mixed up with her Bibles and tracts. She wore eyeglasses and a green veil, and was either in a chronic state of weeps or of saying her *paternosters*. Then there was a wan-faced, anemic little clergyman who was going over to Burmah. Every morning he gathered the spinster missionaries round him in the long saloon for prayers before the tables were set for breakfast. It looked like—like a sort of highly religious harem. He had a long, lean, melancholy face and one loose tooth, right in front, that wobbled when he talked. It got on one's nerves awfully! It seemed to fascinate me—I couldn't help looking at it. He seemed to punctuate his conversation with that tooth. And then there was a pretty American girl who was chaperoning her mother in the usual high-handed American girl way. The first mate was madly in love with her. She flirted outrageously with him as far as Ceylon, then she transferred her dimpled smiles and favors to a black-browed Companion of the Indian Empire who was returning from a three months' leave. After that the melancholy little first mate moped round and glared at them from remote corners like the handsome tenor in an opera, and ate absent-mindedly of anything that was set before him, drank champagne and looked as if he wished he had never been born."

"It sounds paradoxical," drawled little Mrs. Stanlaws, sleepily, munching a square of almond toffee. "Just think of the fathomless depths of despair into which a man must be sunk to drink champagne and at the same time wish he had never been born! The thing's impossible. You ask too much of my imagination."

"Y—yes," stammered Flossy, apologetically, "it *does* sound Mun-

chauseny. But he was so soaked in soulful sorrow and sunk in the depths of 'some divine despair,' and all that Swinburnian and Tennysonian sort of thing, you know, that champagne just went off him like water off a duck's back."

She fluttered the leaves of her notebook a moment and burst into a ripple of laughter. "And those dear little brown *ayahs*—I have a lot about them. They took care of the English *memsahibs*' babies, you know. And then there was Teddy Vanderwater. He was Mrs. Van Rasseler-West's brother, you know. He comes over every alternate year in the interest of the big tea and spice house in London of which he is the junior member. But he says he wouldn't live here if you gave him all Bengal and threw in the Viceroy's *tulub* (pay). He was so kind to me coming over!"

"Haven't a doubt of it; it probably didn't cost him any effort."

"Especially in the Bay of Biscay. Oh, but the Bay did live up to its reputation!" went on Flossy. "One doesn't quote much poetry about the beauties of 'life on the ocean wave' when sousing down fathoms deep and bobbing up again to the top of yeasty mountains in the Bay of Biscay! But when I could stagger out on deck Teddy Vanderwater was sure to be there to take a header toward me with steamer rugs and a deck chair, and lemonade with *real* ice in it—I think he hypnotized the steward to get that—and boxes of orange *glacé*—"

"Begin with Gibraltar," came sleepily from little Mrs. Stanlaws, as she punched the couch pillows under her head. "Do pull down those *chicks* (Venetian blinds), Flossy, and get on to Gibraltar."

"My notebook says, 'Frowning Gibraltar glowered upon us with its bristling guns—'"

"Sounds familiar. Must have got it from 'Round the World,'" came with a smothered laugh from the occupant of the couch under the *pun-kah*.

"And of course I was wild to go up into the Alameda Gardens. Don't they

just make you think of a great big beautiful fairy world clinging there on the mountain side, Aunt Nellie? And Teddy Vanderwater was *so* kind! He rushed round and got us a wobbly vehicle which was a cross between a prairie schooner and a blue hearse, with a wildly flapping top and a whole scale of hysterical squeaks. And on the way back we fell among thieves——”

“You—you don’t mean——?”

“Curio dealers, Aunt Nellie—they’re the biggest thieves in Christendom. And I loaded Teddy Vanderwater down with Persian china, and Cairo lamps, and wicked-looking Ghurka knives, and vases, and fans—oh, but he was an amiable pack-horse! When the fierce-looking Spanish grandee I’d bought them of handed me the bill, and like the Ancient Mariner ‘fixed me with his glassy eye’ and tried to make me understand how much I owed him, I asked Teddy Vanderwater if *he* knew what the fierce little man was trying to say, and he laughed and said he had no idea, but that it *sounded* like the price of a corner lot in Paradise. Isn’t he droll?”

“Very,” with a smothered yawn. “Your notebook seems to be fairly bristling with Teddyisms. But one can’t live on *bons mots*, however delicious. You would have shown better judgment to have given him his *congé* when you reached the Bombay jetty, then he wouldn’t have been trailing after you all these months in Calcutta. You’d better go and dress, Flossy—it’s almost two, and Colonel Heathcote is sure to call before tiffin. Don’t wear that yellow chiffon; it isn’t full enough in the back breadths. Give it to some of those American missionaries—they don’t care how scant they are in the back breadths.”

“And then, one beatific morning,” went on Flossy, ignoring the interruption, “behold a wonder! There was historic old Vesuvius spitting fire like an angry god. And Teddy Vanderwater declared that he *knew* the unaccommodating monster consented

to erupt just for my benefit; he says he has crossed three times before and he never saw it emit a spark big enough to light a cigarette. Fancy!” Flossy’s white teeth flashed in a reminiscent smile, and she seemed lost in happy reverie.

“Teddy didn’t order any earthquakes, or typhoons, or showers of falling stars, or anything in that line, did he?” sarcastically. “You know perfectly well, Flossy, that you practically engaged yourself to Colonel Heathcote last London season, when he was over——”

“It wasn’t announced.”

“No, I grant that; simply because you wouldn’t let it be. But you sailed, under Mrs. Rasseler-West’s chaperonage, as his fiancée. Of course Teddy Vanderwater is a very nice fellow——”

“Oh, awfully!”

“As far as he goes, that is. But he’s not to be *thought* of matrimonially. He’s good-looking——”

“Oh, awfully!”

“I admit he has a taking manner and a good deal of magnetic——”

“Oh, loads of it! And so considerate, and strong, and warm-hearted; and generous to a fault.”

“Especially to his own faults,” struck in little Mrs. Stanlaws, maliciously, dangling a small Turkish slipper from her toe and smothering an abortive yawn.

“And at Naples,” went on Flossy, enthusiastically—“oh, *have* you ever done Naples, Aunt Nellie?”

“Do you suppose I’ve crossed three times, child, and haven’t done Naples to a finish?”

“Oh, but have you ever done Naples, and seen the loads and loads of flowers, and the blue bay, and the dear little donkey with bells, and—and been in love, Aunt Nellie?”

“No,” said little Mrs. Stanlaws, rising suddenly on her elbow and giving vent to a very plebeian sniff; “no, I’ve never done Naples with a donkey and been in love—with the donkey.”

With the amiable placidity of one of Fra Angelico’s angels Flossy rattled on:

"And at Pompeii—of course you've done Pompeii, Aunt Nellie?"

"To the last ditch."

"Well, so had Teddy Vanderwater; but—"

"Oh, for mercy's sake, Teddy me no more Teddies! Let me hear of *some* place without Teddy in the foreground!"

"But—but you don't want 'Hamlet' with *Hamlet* left out, do you?" said Flossy, daringly. She held a square of toffee high above her head and dropped it into her small, laughing mouth with a grace and ease suggestive of *legerdemain*. "Of course he knew Pompeii by heart. But do you know, it was just like his unselfishness to rush round to all points of interest with me and help me absorb a lot of ancient history and lava dust."

"And where, in the meantime, was your supposed chaperon? She doesn't figure very conspicuously in your narrative. You weren't chasing round to all these places alone—with the Unselfish Young Man, I hope. Where, may I ask, was Mrs. Van Rasseler-West?"

"Where was she? Why, she—she was in the Temple of Juno reading Bulwer's 'Last Days,' of course, and keeping her eyes on the text like any well-regulated chaperon who is up on her part. She's a perfect love, Mrs. Van Rasseler-West is."

"Oh, I see."

"But Mrs. Van Rasseler-West *didn't*. She absolutely never saw *anything*—except the scenery, you know, and the guide book, and the distant hills. Oh, she was a perfect dear, Teddy Vanderwater's sister was! And evenings on deck, when the moon played hide-and-seek in the rigging, and we did a two-step on a holy-stoned deck, she always strummed on her mandolin and—why, really, I never saw anyone so perfectly lovely and so self-effacing. And the ship's officers were all *so* nice to Mrs. Van Rasseler-West! The captain used to bring her roses, and bonbons, and—"

"Oh, I see. I just wondered, when you told me that Mrs. Van Rasseler-

West chaperoned you coming over, I wondered, at the time, who had chaperoned Mrs. Van Rasseler-West. And did you stop at Port Saïd, that iniquitous old place? And what did your chaperon read at Port Saïd?"

Flossy was fingering a small, withered bunch of jasmine flowers that lay meekly crushed against the page and exhaled a faint, sweet perfume.

"Oh, yes; I'll never forget Port Saïd. It was there I dropped a glove, and—oh, well, it didn't amount to anything, of course, only I saw the finger of it afterward sticking out of Teddy Vanderwater's inside coat pocket, and he *didn't give it back to me*. Yes," with a beatific sigh, "I'll always remember dear old Port Saïd, with its glittering gambling houses, where the black-browed men went in and out, or sipped their drinks at rustic tables under the trees. It looked like the opening scene of a comic opera. Awfully handsome men—but Teddy Vanderwater said that he was morally sure every one of them had a knife up his sleeve. It was there that we sat in the Park and he told me about India and—"

"And your chaperon read—what?"

"I don't just remember. But something awfully absorbing—anyway, there were two volumes of it. And Teddy Vanderwater kept talking about tigers in India, and centipedes, and tarantulas, and mutinies; he thinks it's a frightfully unhealthy climate and a very undesirable place to live."

"I think so, too—for Teddy."

Flossy was stroking her cheek with the faded jasmine flower as she went on. "And then at moonrise one balmy evening, far in the distance, we saw the shadowy outline of Ceylon."

"And there were sixteen people on the quarterdeck quoting: 'What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's shore,'" chimed in little Mrs. Stanlaws, as she fanned the blond hair off her forehead briskly. "Oh, I know them—haven't I suffered from 'em? I'm simply parboiled in this heat; have the *ayah* bring us some lemon ice. How I wish Tom

could afford to take us to Simla for the hot weather, away from this sizzling Calcutta. Of course, you'll spend your hot-weathers in Simla. Colonel Heathcote owns one of the swellest little bungalows there."

"But I have no possible interest in his Simla bungalows."

"You've lost your mind, Flossy, coming over."

"No, it wasn't my *mind* I lost."

"And I simply won't listen to your being so blind to your own good fortune. Such a catch as Colonel Heathcote is, too! Under Secretary, you know, immense salary; and his social position—"

"As I was saying," continued Flossy, monotonously, "beautiful Ceylon, with its fringe of cocoanut palms, and the spinster missionaries quoting: 'What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,' while the very wind round the flag-staff seemed quavering, 'And only man is vile.' The pale-faced little clergyman with that wobbly front tooth sang, in a high, nasal falsetto, 'Lead, Kindly Light.' And the little missionary with the green veil did a silent weep which was part nostalgia and part a horrible cold in the head from those changeable trade winds."

"Do get on to Madras, Flossy," came petulantly in a smothered voice from the couch. "Had Mrs. Van Rasseler-West reached the second volume by Madras?"

"Poor dear," sighed Flossy, with sweet compassion, "she had a perfectly frightful headache and simply couldn't leave her berth."

"In the name of the saints! You don't mean to tell me you outraged the proprieties by prancing off round Madras—"

"With the spinster missionary and the anemic little clergyman, and Teddy Vanderwater? Of course. . . . Wasn't that the gate, Aunt Nellie?" She rose lazily and walked to the open casement. "I thought I heard the gate. I like that queer little custom you Anglo-Indians have of putting a box at the gate when you don't want to receive; your

friends just drive by and drop in their visiting cards, and thank their lucky stars for getting off so easily. You told the bearer *darwaza bund* (the door is closed) to-day, didn't you?"

"Yes," yawned Mrs. Stanlaws, "but of course Colonel Heathcote understands he has the privilege of intimacy, and can 'run the box' at any time. Which being translated from Anglo-Indian to English means, can come in just the same, though to the rest of the world we are not at home. But we are all victims to the ridiculous custom of calling from twelve till two, the very hottest hours of the day. The natives have better sense—they lounge in the shade and smoke their hubble-bubbles, and know that Allah or the Viceroy will provide backsheesh and rice for the morrow. You'd better dress, Flossy. The Colonel is sure to want you to drive round the Maidan after tiffin."

"I'm not going—it's too hot."

"Nonsense! You didn't think it was too hot to explore those stuffy bazaars with Teddy Vanderwater. Why doesn't he go back to London? I never knew him to stay here through the hot weather before."

"He's been doing Calcutta with me. I've learned that a Rajah is never a Mohammedan, and that a Hindu is never a Sheik."

"And you've magnified every small, inoffensive cockroach into a centipede or a tarantula, and eaten those puffy custard apples and corpulent mangoes, and have escaped cholera, gout and leprosy. I'm at the end of my patience with you. There isn't a girl in all Bengal who wouldn't jump at the chance—"

"Nobody jumps in India, Aunt Nellie. The climate is not conducive to such exertion."

"—who wouldn't jump at the chance of becoming the wife of the Under Secretary. The social position is so desirable—"

"If one could only say the same of the Colonel!"

"Flossy, you're simply incorrigible! Colonel Heathcote is a distinguished gentleman; *what* can you

find to object to in him? Always refined, courteous, immaculately well groomed—”

“‘Thrice armed is he whose dress coat fits,’” quoted Flossy, airily, with a *moue* of pretty contempt.

“I concede that he ‘doesn’t hand-some much,’” admitted little Mrs. Stanlaws, “but there are other things of more—”

“Oh, I can’t *bear* the back of his neck!”

“Flossy!”

“No, I can’t. It’s fat and it’s wrinkled just like those little pink pigs one sees in front of the markets.”

“Flossy!”

“And he puffs and he wheezes, and he laughs a fat, asthmatic chuckle—and he’s so much older than I am, Aunt Nellie, that by the time I am forty he will be so wizened and dried up he’ll just crackle like old parchment. And I just *hate* that yellow fuzz on the back of his big, freckly hands—it’s like the down on a newly hatched gosling!”

“His salary in rupees would make any girl but *you* blind to the down on his hands. He has been very considerate, and has made a great deal of allowance for the fact of your being young and not knowing your own mind—”

“He never made a bigger mistake in his life if he thinks that,” laughed Flossy, with a high head.

“But he won’t keep on forever mooning round you and being snubbed; especially when every mother in Calcutta with a marriageable daughter would give her eye teeth if she could call him son-in-law. Why, Tom says that that swagger English dowager, the Honorable Mrs. Humphrey Ayres, would just think she had ‘butted the bull off the bridge’—to use his own expression—if she could ensnare him for Eu-phrasia. Here’s the *ayah*,” as a meek, brown creature, with jingling bracelets and clattering anklets, salaamed before her mistress. “What is it, *ayah*? The girl held a card on a teakwood salver. “Colonel Heathcote. I thought so. Very well, *ayah*,

salaam do (give greeting). Tell the bearer to serve tea and wafers to the *sahib* on the veranda. *Sumja?* (Do you understand?) And say that the little *memsahib* will be down presently. And *jeldi karo* (be quick about it), or may your father’s rice fields wither.”

The *ayah* salaamed automatically and backed through the chattering reed portières.

“Here, *ayah, lejas* (take away),” said Flossy, in her very meagre Hindustani, handing over the plate, depleted of almond toffee. She slipped a coin into the lean, brown hand. “And tell the *sahib*,” she whispered, “that the little *memsahib* will not be down. To-morrow *daga dustari* (I will give new clothes), *ayah*, and many ribbons.”

“And now, for mercy’s sake, *do* hurry and dress,” fumed little Mrs. Stanlaws, with her mouth full of hairpins, as she began languidly getting together her own cool muslin and lace preparatory to dressing for tiffin. It was served every afternoon by a florid, turbaned Hindu, who was resplendent in a loin cloth and a vast acreage of glittering brown epidermis; always under the tamarind trees in the compound, with parrots calling noisily from the branches. Gnarled mahogany trees shaded the mossy tank, and a frangipani tree shook out sweet, spicy odors when the south wind ruffled its branches. A spreading banyan tree had, ages ago, preëmpted one corner of the jungly compound, and held out warning arms against all intruders. Here the shrill-voiced frogs and mynas, with acute bronchitis, screeched love songs in the cool of the evening.

“But I haven’t finished telling you about Madras, Aunt Nellie,” began Flossy, breathlessly. “I—we—”

“You don’t propose to keep the Colonel waiting while you prose on about Madras?” mumbled Mrs. Stanlaws, dropping a hairpin from her mouth and stabbing the cushion with a long stick pin. “He has shown the patience of Job. But last night at Government House reception,

when you were mooning with Teddy Vanderwater half the evening out on the veranda, I saw a look in the Colonel's eye—”

“Was it the one that squints, Aunt Nellie?—the off eye, you know.”

“—a look of determination that makes me know he has come for his final answer to-day. Why don't you wear that blue organdie with the ruffles, Flossy? Are you going to stand there all day drumming the devil's tattoo on that screen?”

“I'm going to finish telling you about Madras, Aunt Nellie.”

“Great Scott! can't I hear about Madras to-morrow?”

“No. I'm going to tell you to-day.”

“Then wait till we go down and tell it to the Colonel, too. He's done Madras some half-dozen times or more—but he's interested in *any* sort of gabble from you.”

“I'm not going down.”

This was given forth like the issuing of a manifesto. Flossy's pretty mouth was set in a determined line now; the very dimple in her chin looked belligerent, and she pushed the tumbled hair back from her face with an excited gesture. She suggested a small, prancing war horse that scents the battle afar and waits an opening to dash into the fray.

She hadn't long to wait.

“You're—not—going—down?” gasped her irate relative, dropping the hair brush and subsiding limply on the couch.

“No—I'm not going down,” reiterated Flossy, trailing her diaphanous draperies across the room and dropping in a limp heap beside the bamboo couch, her face smothered in its pillows. When she looked up her cheeks were crimson, and there was a funny little quiver about the corners of her mouth, that trembled between laughter and tears.

“No—I'm not going down. I'm going to tell you about Madras. You see, we went wandering round about the old streets, with their picturesque bazaars and odoriferous natives and quaint old churches—”

“Yes—yes. Do get on, Flossy.

You've gone daffy over that notebook. What do I care about Madras?”

“Well, you see, we found lots of things that you wouldn't have *thought* of looking for; among them a registrar's office and a cute little church all decorated for a native wedding. 'Twas like walking into a big box of Oriental perfume and aromatic spices when we went into that little church—loads of roses.”

“Come—come, Flossy, get on. How tiresome you are with your eternal tale of Madras! The idea of your prosing on here over that notebook while the Colonel is driven to profanity down on that sweltering piazza.”

“And do you know,” gurgled Flossy, with a ripple of happy laughter, “that I just *love* that little homely spinster missionary with the green veil! She and the anemic little clergyman were with us, you know. And after we went back to the ship she did another little weep, which made her nose rosier than ever, and kissed me and said—” Flossy sat suddenly erect, with her saucy chin tip-tilted, as if ready for the oncoming foe, “and said—that she had never been a bridesmaid before.”

“Flossy!” Little Mrs. Stanlaws was on her feet now and looking down into the girl's upturned, laughing face. “You don't mean—?”

“Oh, but I *do*, Aunt Nellie,” gasped Flossy, breathlessly. “It was all done in a minute in that little church with the loads of roses. And we found a registrar—and the knot's tied as tight as if the Bishop had made the noose—”

“Flossy! you can't mean—?”

“Oh, but I *do*, Aunt Nellie. Teddy promised to love and obey—or I promised to love and be gay—which was it? Well, it doesn't matter either way. And 'with all my wordly goods I thee endow,' and 'till death do us,' and so forth. We made the responses in a voice that made the nervous little registrar jump. And we joined hands and looked silly and scared like they always do—and the little clergyman with the wobbly tooth, you know, did the rest.”

THE TROUBADOUR

SWEET songs he sung throughout the moonlit night
 Unto the Court. Love's woe and its delight,
 Love's flush-tide and the tide of love at ebb—
 All this he wove into his measure's web,
 And hearts he touched as surely as his lute,
 Waking lost chords and memories long mute,
 Till the King said: "He knows whereof he sings,
 This poet with his lute of many strings!
 Man cannot sing unless he understand!"

And the King questioned him how he, so young,
 Had known Love's ardors. Then, with laughing tongue,
 The Troubadour made answer: "Certes, sire,
 Man may not touch a star, yet guess it's fire;
 Man may not dive into the ocean's deep,
 Yet know that treasures are within its keep.
 I never trembled at a woman's kiss,
 Yet I have dreamed of Love's supernal bliss.
 My song is art, not heart; each note is planned."

The King's lone daughter in her chamber heard
 The splendid harmony of note and word,
 As the young Troubadour took up his song;
 Through columned corridors she passed along
 Until within her father's hall she stood,
 White with the purity of maidenhood;
 Her face, moon-mild, shone from her hair's soft haze—
 As moon draws water, so she drew his gaze!
 His fingers dropped the strings that they had spanned.

The silence smothered a half-sounded note,
 The song, love-laden, died within his throat.
 His hand, uncertain, sought the strings and marred
 The harmony with notes that only jarred;
 While through his soul thrilled melodies so great
 No sound was meet their glory to translate!
 Then spake the Troubadour: "My lute is dumb!
 Man cannot sing—he *feels*, when Love is come!"
 And lo, the lute fell jangling from his hand!

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



AT THE SUMMER HOTEL

"**S**HE has a good voice, but she doesn't seem to be able to control it."
 "No; she sings whenever anyone asks her."

CONCERNING BEULAH

By John Tompkins

I SEE HER

WHOM is that girl dancing with Jack Stafford?" I said.

"Have you a cigarette?" replied Harry. And when I had given him one, "That," said he, "is the beautiful Beulah."

"It is a queer name," I observed. "I shouldn't mind meeting her."

"Let me have a match, Jack, will you?" said Harry.

I supplied him with a match. He is always borrowing matches and cigarettes. As he puffed he looked at me quizzically.

"Oh, I'll introduce you," said he. "You'll make a fool of yourself for three days, and that is a long time when a man has only two weeks' vacation."

"But why only three days?" I asked.

"Of course," Harry replied, "you can make a fool of yourself in other ways afterward. But she always throws a man over after three days. It is well known of her, and after that she gives a chap no chance to make a fool of himself."

"She is coming this way now," said I. "What else are vacations for except to give a man a chance to make a fool of himself?"

She may have heard me, for she gave me a sudden sidelong glance, with a little lift of her eyebrows that I thought at the time not wholly unattractive.

II

I MEET HER

"Miss HASTINGS," said Harry, "let me present to you my friend, Mr.

Tompkins, and," he added, "he's not a bad sort, Beulah."

"Your friends never are," said she, holding out her hand to me.

"Also," continued Harry, "he insists on making a fool of himself."

"For as long as possible," said I, holding her hand a little longer than is essential the first time you hold a girl's hand.

"I hope you won't find it too difficult," she replied, drawing away her fingers.

III

I TAKE HER ROWING

IT was a warm, bright, lovely Sunday morning. A light breeze stirred the leaves and broke the water into ripples. I had met her the night before. I had had three dances with her. And at eleven o'clock this morning I was to call for her at her cottage and take her rowing.

Two weeks' vacation is not a long time.

As I came out from the breakfast table I met Harry.

"Going to Beulah's this morning?" he asked.

"Why?" said I, "are you?"

"I!" he exclaimed. "I've been through the mill. She and I are good friends, and a fellow doesn't have time to call on good friends when there are other girls around. Well, I hope you'll have a pleasant morning."

"Oh, I'm not going," said I. "By the way, how do you get to her rustic home?"

Harry laughed, without any reason so far as I observed. However, he told me the way and that was all that was necessary.

When I arrived there, at five minutes to eleven, a lady was on the piazza, reading a hymn-book.

"Is Miss Hastings at home?" I asked. Yes, she was at home; she would be down in a moment. Wouldn't I be seated? Her aunt. Yes? And Beulah had spoken of Mr. Tompkins; such a good dancer, too! Now really!

Well, we *had* had some first-rate dances.

At twelve o'clock she came down. "I was so tired after the dance," she said, pathetically. "But there's lots of time yet. I'm *so* sorry to have kept you waiting."

We didn't row very far. We found a secluded spot in the woods. The time passed by not unpleasantly. We had been sitting quite near to each other for a long time, eloquently silent. At last she sighed.

"What is it, dearest?" I asked, tenderly. Two weeks' vacation is so short a time.

"We must go, Jack," she replied; "it's late."

I looked at my watch. It *was* late. It was a quarter to three. Dinner at the hotel would just be over. All the people would be on the piazza. They would see us as we passed by. I wished there was another way to the cottage. As we passed by the hotel piazza I talked to her gaily, as if there were not two hundred impertinent eyes on us and a hundred gossipping tongues wagging, oh, so merrily.

We had got about half-way past the piazza when a sweet, shrill voice called out to me. It was the voice of my small sister—my dear small sister.

"Oh, brother!" the dear little thing exclaimed, "we're all finished with dinner! Where have you been? Mamma's really been quite worried." And then, as an afterthought, "She knew you were out with Beulah!" she shouted.

I cannot say that at the moment I appreciated the loving solicitude of my family.

"What a dear little sister you have," said Beulah. There was a gleam in

Beulah's eye. She seemed to be enjoying the situation. I couldn't see why. Nor did I think it good form for the people on the piazza to laugh audibly. Yet they did.

When we got to Beulah's cottage her mother was standing at the gate.

"Oh," said her mother, "I've been *so* worried; dinner has been waiting for you at least an hour."

I was not asked to stay to dinner.

IV

I TAKE HER TO THE EUCHRE PARTY

TUESDAY evening there was a euchre party. She went to it with me.

"Well," said Harry, when we happened to be at the same table, "the evening of the third day. Is it all over?"

"Far from it," I said.

"Wait till the evening is done," Harry replied.

"This is a serious affair," I said. "No three days' flirtation."

"In love with her?" Harry inquired.

"Harry, old man, I am," I confided. "Not only her looks, though she's the prettiest girl I've ever seen, but her brain, her wit, her character! I'm a lucky fellow."

After the euchre there was a dance. I had engaged the first dance with her that evening. But she forgot it somehow; also the third, which was mine. In fact, she seemed mightily interested in a chap that she called Tom, though I knew she had just met him.

I had two more dances with her after the third, but I forgot them—my memory can be bad.

I sat around on the piazza feeling quite happy. Occasionally I could catch a glimpse of her.

After the dancing was over I waited for her wraps. Last Sunday morning seemed far away. I found it interesting to smoke my pipe, though I let it go out once or twice. At last she came for her wraps. I wondered whether she would spar for time.

"You've been simply horrid," said she.

"Here are your wraps," I replied, rising.

She took them.

"I thought you had forgotten about me, so, as Mr. Hall offered to take me home, I said he might."

She seemed to be waiting for something. For an instant I thought of saying some of the things that were on my lips to say. But instead I struck a match to light my pipe. The match went out.

"Oh, pshaw!" she exclaimed, "the match is out."

"Don't be distressed," I replied; "there are plenty more." And I lighted my pipe.

"It's so sensible of you to have more than one match," she remarked.

"One should be provided," I said.

"I've tried to be nice," she replied, "and you have been simply horrid. Still, I forgive you."

She smiled sweetly. Just then Mr. Hall joined us.

"You know Mr. Hall, do you not, Mr. Tompkins?" said Beulah.

I grasped his hand warmly. "I'm very glad to meet you," said I.

"Won't you hold my cape for me?"

said Beulah, looking directly between us. I had heard the clock strike midnight ten minutes ago. The three days were over. What was the use of holding her cape? Yet I must admit that I should have taken a little longer about it than Hall did. Still, the three days were over.

Nevertheless—why should I not confess it?—I spent the rest of the night writing verses.

V

I READ ALOUD

I LOOKED over what I have here written down; my wife is rather a good critic; I wanted to know what she thought of it. Still, I felt that she might think I had been a rather frivolous person at various times in the past. So I hesitated.

"Well," said she, "I'm waiting."

I cleared my throat and read. "How is it?" I asked, when I had done reading.

My wife sniffed contemptuously. Her cheeks were a bit flushed.

"You don't like it?" said I.

"It makes me out rather a flirt!" said my wife.



PLAINT OF THE SUMMER MAID

AH, me, how dull is a nook,
Though as snug as snug can be,
With just one's self, and a book,
And a circling arm of the sea!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



PRAYER DE LUXE

MRS. NEW-RICH (*to bookseller*)—I want an Episcopal prayer-book.
BOOKSELLER—Here, madam, is a very fine Book of Common Prayer.

MRS. NEW-RICH (*sniffing*)—Do I look like a person who wanted a book of common prayer? Give me the best or nothing. I don't care what it costs.

THE THIRD PERSON

NOW these are the words her husband said:
 "Oh, yes, your gown's all right,
 But you know you never look well in red,
 And the thing's too gay and bright."
 "You light the room like a rose abloom
 With its hundred leaves astir—
A rose too fair for a clown to wear,"
 Said the Tertium Quid to her.

Now these are the words her husband said:
 "Good Lord, you women are wise!
 You have raced and chased till you look half-dead
 And have circles beneath your eyes."
 "To-night your smile is as faint the while
 As a star in the mist's dim blur.
You're tired, I know, but you're loveliest so,"
 Said the Tertium Quid to her.

Now these are the words her husband said:
 "He'll pay for it, every cent!
 But why should she choose that man instead?—
 She ought to have been content!"
 "Oh, women are dear and women are queer
 And are bought with a coin forbid;
 And their husbands MAY grow wise some day,"
 Reflected the Tertium Quid.

McCREA PICKERING.



THE WAYS OF WOMAN

"**T**HREE is one thing about modern society that puzzles me," said the philosopher.
 "What's that?"
 "The older women are all the time anxious to get in; the young and pretty ones want to come out."



HAMLIN'S SOLILOQUY

HAMLIN (*standing before the Tattooed Man in the dime museum*)—
 Heavens! how that fellow must suffer if he ever gets the jim jams!

ORCHIDS OR ARBUTUS?

By Katrina Trask

HOW delicious it all is, Alice! I wonder if you appreciate your blessings!"

"What is delicious, Flora?"

"Everything; that spinning drive in the Park behind those adorable horses; this luxurious, sense-satisfying room; this incomparable tea—where do you get it? Oh, I love wealth! I was made for it, and it was made for me, only we haven't found each other yet."

Flora took off her hat and leaned her auburn head, capricious with curls, against the downy cushions. Her relaxed surrender to the comforts was a charming contrast to the vigorous alertness of her erect personality.

"Wealth doesn't bring happiness," sighed the placid Alice, whose smooth, unruffled brow looked as if she had never known what it is to be unhappy—or happy, either, for that matter.

"No, it doesn't bring happiness, but, as someone says, 'Think of the misery it shuts out.'

"Flora, I don't understand how you, with your splendid intellect and your knowledge of spiritual things, can care so much for money, luxury, wealth."

Flora flashed a radiant, indulgent smile on Alice, and rising, stroked her cheek caressingly.

"My sweet Alice, don't talk platitudes. It is really funny to see you sitting there behind all that gleaming silver—which suggests English history till I find myself saying George the First, George the Second, George the Third, and so on—dressed in that maddening gown—which is a delight to my eyes—and lauding poverty, which you have never known and never by any possible chance can know."

"Neither have you known it," said Alice, emphatically.

"Comparatively—yes, I have; everything is comparative. When I think of the girls in our set I feel like a penniless pauper."

"But you always look so awfully stunning! Your gown, for example, is much more 'maddening,' as you say, than mine. I will leave it to the next luncheon coterie to decide; I am sure that is a supreme court on such matters."

"My gown? Oh, if you could have seen Minna and me toiling over it! I wasted more energy over the old thing than it was worth; and as for this hat—don't you think it is smart?—it is made from the bits of last Summer's. I can smell the sea breezes in its folds. I trimmed it myself, and it cost just three dollars."

"Well, if it looks much better than mine, which cost forty-five dollars at François's, what more do you want?"

"In the first place, Alice, that is absurd. You are a delight to my eyes; if you would only put your things on a little differently you would be perfection. But granting, for argument's sake, if you will, that I look as you say I do, with my pittance, battling with the elements all alone—with no one to help me but poor, patient, long-suffering Minna—she altered these sleeves five times—what should I be if I had *carte blanche*? Wouldn't I astonish society! I have never been able to understand why women who have money don't feel an artistic responsibility to the world."

Alice folded her pretty, white hands and turned her blue eyes reproach-

fully on Flora. She had stanch standards; she belonged to Dr. Bates's Bible class.

"The Bible says money is the root of all evil," she said, reprovingly.

"Not at all, Alice; you are quite wrong; the Bible says no such thing. The Bible says the *love* of money is the root of all evil, and it is usually the people who haven't money who love it most. Of course, the love of money is detestable, vulgar, disgusting."

"But you just said you loved it."

"Oh, my dear Alice! If you weren't the sweetest, truest, dearest thing in all the world, you would be unbearable. Don't—don't, for your own sake, be so deadly literal. Don't you know the difference between loving a thing and *loving* a thing?"

"Flora, if you weren't so sane and well-balanced and jolly and nice, you would be a lunatic—you say such queer, contradictory things."

"Alice, that is clever. Give me another cup of tea."

Alice took Flora's cup and filled it gracefully. She, of course, would not permit herself to be self-conscious or conceited—she considered it would contradict her standard—but if she had any choice of setting for her blond prettiness, of which she tried to be unconscious, it was behind the tea table, toying with the gleaming silver and the fragile cups, that were no whiter than her own hands.

"Flora, when I say anything that sounds like you, anything that is a—what do you call it?—a paraphrase on something you have said, you always think it is clever."

Flora laughed a bright, rippling laugh and sipped her tea.

"Now, let me explain to you the difference, my child," Flora said, after a few moments. "The love of money, as money, is detestable, miserly. It is the lust of having, hoarding, holding; but the love of the opportunity that money brings, the love of the fulness and florescence and usefulness of life which comes from power and opportunity, is quite a different thing. We do not need externals.

As Browning says, 'Incentives come from the soul's self,' but the soul's self can expand and develop best when it can give and move and grow and have the practical opportunity that wealth brings. Look at my music, for example. Don't you suppose my soul grows through my music? I ought to take singing lessons, but I can no more afford a hundred dollars a quarter than I could pay the national debt, and I would not have a poor teacher."

Alice leaned forward, a quick affection in her eyes.

"Flora, won't you please—?"

But before she had finished her sentence Flora was beside her, with a finger on her lips and an arm caressingly around her neck.

"Don't say it, dear, please; I know what you were going to say, and I thank you, but of course I could not speak as freely as this if you thought I was complaining, or if telling you anything personal became personal. I was merely explaining."

Alice pushed away the detaining hand.

"Won't you please, Flora—?"

"Alice, the greatest gift anyone can give me is reverence for my reserve, all the more when I have broken through it. Can't you understand?"

"Yes, I do understand, you dear, proud thing."

Flora went back to her seat and took up her tea and her argument.

"I don't think I feel about wealth as other persons do. With me it would bring out what it seems to shut out in others. The more money women have, as a rule, the more conventional and formal they become, the more they grow circumscribed. As for me, the more money I should have the more romantic and full and emotional life would be. If I had great halls to sweep through, great spaces, I should have a sense that life was more heroic, and I should try to live up to it. If I could do as you do, have artistic, well-fitting gowns, without bothering about them, I could have more time for

other things, and if I had the money to send abroad for my clothes, I should inspire creations—picture dresses. Then I could have musicians and artists and literary men about me, and help them, and make life for them, and a larger life for myself through them; it would be glowing, radiant, rewarding, as well as deliciously enjoyable. I hate a small life; I want to breathe!"

Alice looked at Flora with admiring eyes.

"Yes, I always said if you married a very rich man you would infuse society with new life-blood."

"I intend to marry very soon," Flora announced, with an emphatic nod.

"Oh, Flora! whom?"

"I haven't decided on the man yet. He is a minor consideration, but I intend to marry. In the first place, we are getting old; I am twenty-five, and my visit abroad last Summer convinced me that the plan of a deliberate, calculating, intellectual decision about the holy estate of matrimony is very rational and sensible. A married woman has a larger sphere. Then, I want children."

"Oh, Flora! How can you say such things?"

"If I married I'd have them, shouldn't I?"

"I presume so," Alice answered, reluctantly.

"Well, I think I should be a most improper and immoral young woman to have what I could not speak of."

"Would you marry for money?" Alice hastened to ask, to get on safe ground.

"No, I wouldn't marry for money, but I should thank God if money came with the man I was willing to marry."

"Would it influence you, all things being equal?"

"Certainly. What was my common sense given to me for? But when are things ever equal?" Flora smiled as she continued: "For the sake of my children, who seem to be so objectionable to you, I should rejoice in money; I intend my boys to

be great men. They must go abroad and have a university training, with some years in Germany, or perhaps in France."

"Oh, Flora, how funny you are! You make me dizzy."

"One of my girls is to study art, and one of them is—"

"Flora, stop! I want to find out about the present. That is all my little mind can compass. Would you be willing to marry a poor man?"

"I cannot tell; I never thought about marrying a poor man; I don't know any really poor men well. That is—" she hesitated, the color coming in warm waves—"only one, and he wouldn't marry me."

"Why not, I'd like to know?"

Alice was in arms at once.

"Oh, he is a philosopher and a poet, and wouldn't deign to think of such a frivolous worldling as I am. I met him two Summers ago at that little country place, Deepwood, where mother went when she was ill."

"Is he poor?"

"Absolutely penniless. He has nothing but what he makes by writing, and that is not much. His books haven't any vogue—they are too beautiful," Flora added, under her breath.

"My dear, you are in love with him; I know by your blush—but no, that doesn't prove anything. Your color is always coming and going. I love to sit by you at the opera and watch it, you dear. But are you?"

"Alice! You might as well ask me if I am in love with Plato or Virgil or Dante. He belongs to another world, another life, another sphere."

"Tell me about him; is he attractive?"

"Attractive? what do you mean by attractive?"

"Flora, you know perfectly well what I mean by attractive. Do talk; if you don't talk about him I shall know you are in love with him."

"And if I do?"

"Then I can make up my mind. Is he handsome? Please tell me."

"Yes."

"Is he clever? But of course he

must be, if he is Plato and Dante and all those old stupids."

"Extremely clever."

"What colored eyes?"

"Alice, how absurd you are! Seagray sometimes, and sometimes deep blue."

"There! I wanted to see if you remembered."

Flora smiled. "I dare say I should not have the faintest idea had it not been for an incident. One day we drove over to the shore, and while we were sitting on the beach I remember looking at the sea and thinking that it matched his eyes exactly. He was giving me a most delightful talk on early Greek poetry, and in quoting he suddenly looked up; then I remember noticing that the blue sky also matched his eyes."

"Now I know you are in love with him!"

"Why?"

Flora laughed.

"Because you say the sea and the sky matched his eyes. If you weren't in love you would have said his eyes matched the sea and sky."

"Alice, you goose!"

"Well, aren't you? You see I have no reverence for your reserve," and Alice gave a little expressive shrug.

"Alice," Flora's voice had a warning note, "I am not in love with anyone—or," she added, more lightly, "I am in love with several, whichever way you choose to put it. I see so many attractive things in so many different men."

"Oh, yes, we all know you are a flirt."

"Please don't use that word; I hate it."

"Well, aren't you?"

"Not at all. Anyone who is many-sided and is not a pachyderm must respond to many natures in different ways."

"But you prefer cleverness to everything, don't you?"

"That depends on what you mean by everything."

"Yes, of course, because if you did you would not be so intimate with me,

for I am a little fool compared with you. I have always thought," Alice added, suddenly, "that you cared for Maurice van Aldene. I could never tell how much. I never can tell about you, you are so puzzling. He is in love with you, that is perfectly plain."

Again the color swept over Flora's face.

"Really, Alice, we must not talk like this. It isn't good taste to pull sacred things to pieces."

"Now, don't get dignified, Flora. Girls all talk about their affairs. The reason I like you so much is because you don't; but you might—a little, once in a while—just with me. Yes, I think he suits you," she continued. "He is handsome, well-bred, high principled, moderately clever, and most *immoderately* rich. I don't believe you will be able to resist him."

"I have not had much temptation to do anything else. He is attentive to a dozen girls."

"But not in the same way he is to you."

"I think he is much more attentive to Helen Leroy. He likes to talk to me, but then— Why, Alice, look at that clock! I must fly. I had no idea it was so late. I had a delightful drive; thank you so much. You mustn't forget the matinée Saturday. Meet me by the box office; and you won't mind the top gallery, will you? The music is much better there."

"Indeed, I shall love it, thank you."

With affectionate good-byes and many last words, and a few last words after the last words, Flora took her leave.

"What a dear Alice is!" she said, as she walked away. "Everyone wonders at our friendship, but I talk to her as I cannot begin to talk to—Marion, for example, with all her congenial cleverness. Alice has a heart of gold."

She had walked a few squares in the gathering dusk when she stopped suddenly. "What is that?" she asked herself. The low, piteous wail of a child came to her ears. She peered

through the falling shadows and saw, crouched on a step, a little prone figure, with clothes too threadbare for the sharp April air. A yellow head, tangled and curly, rested on two crossed chubby hands in an abandon of despair. The wailing ceased and the head was lifted, showing tear-filled eyes, as Flora's strong arms came round the little form with a sheltering sweep that seemed to gather in all the sorrows of the little heart.

"Me want mudder," said the child.

"Yes, darling," Flora answered, tenderly, "we will find her. Tell me where she is."

"Me don't know."

"What is your name?"

"Johnny."

"Johnny what?"

"Just Johnny."

"Now stop crying, Johnny; don't be afraid. Look at me; don't you know you are safe?"

"'Es," said the boy.

"Then, if you aren't afraid, you can show me how you came."

By dint of suggestion, the confusion from fear entirely removed, the boy walked on toward home, until he got his clue to his own environment. Then the situation was simple enough.

Flora mounted the stairs of the dirty, cheap boarding-house, high and narrow, and delivered the boy to his mother. The smell of onions was everywhere; the sights and sounds jarred and clashed on her nerves. The mother seemed a nice woman, in a way, but helplessly and hopelessly blighted by her surroundings.

"Bah! poverty is benumbing," Flora thought, as she hurried home. "It paralyzes the energies and drags one down like a dead weight."

Never had it seemed to her so hard to bear. She found herself tending to philosophic analysis as she walked briskly up the steps of her home, a narrow house on a side street. The door was opened by a trim waitress. It was all in equally sharp contrast to the two pictures her mind held from her afternoon. It was luxury, cozi-

ness, comfort, compared with the dingy, miserable boarding-house; it was restriction, measured by Alice's splendid Fifth Avenue palace, with its liveried footmen and pervasive wealth.

On the little stand in the hall lay several cards. Flora glanced them over carelessly, reading society names that are now familiar shibboleths in the world, for the comings and goings of these people are flaunted far and wide with that ruthless disregard of privacy which is one of the saddest commentaries on our times. Flora's restricted life was in no sense restricted as to these favors. It is a significant fact, malcontents to the contrary, that it is not the size of the house nor the position of the street which secures those much longed for and pathetically prized pieces of pasteboard.

"No mail?" she said to the girl, as if that were the real interest.

"Yes, miss, a great pile. I put it in your room—and a great box of flowers, miss."

The lamp had been lighted in Flora's room. She went straight to the table, drawing off her gloves.

"Ah!" An enormous box marked "Personal" took up nearly the entire table, covering half the books beneath it. She saw before anything else the clear, firm, high-bred handwriting of Maurice van Aldene. A curious prescience possessed her. Ordinarily his flowers were not to be recognized from those of others until his card was found, but this box had been rewrapped, personally addressed and evidently sent by hand direct from Mr. van Aldene. A warm wave of color overspread her cheeks, her neck, her brow; then her eyes fell on her mail, and there, on the top of the pile of letters, was a little box marked "Deepwood." This was also addressed in a handwriting she knew well. Quickly she took it and began to break the string; then changed her mind, laid it down and opened the larger box. Such a wealth of color and splendor and mystery as lay before her! Orchids of every

shade and shape and fairy-like wonder. After a moment's sensuous enjoyment she opened the note that lay among them.

MY LADY:

It does not need that I should tell you I love you, for your heart must have told you that long ago; but it does need that I should know from your heart if I may hope, for life holds no quest for me but your love. With that I can live a truer, perhaps a better existence; to be without it would be death in life. Dare I be so presumptuous as to hope? I have sometimes felt that you were not unmindful or indifferent to my presence. Do not, for a moment, dream that I should be so far lacking in what is due to you as to harbor hope without your permission, or to misunderstand you. Your universal graciousness and the radiance of your nature must flash, even as the sunshine, in obedience to its own laws; but I have wrestled sharply with the question of how much of this I might dare claim as a basis for hope. All that I am is yours, and all that I may become through you lies in your power to grant. I will not speak of what I have, save only to say that by a trick of fate it fortunately makes possible whatever life you choose to live. I will not weary you, but wait for your heart to answer mine.

MAURICE VAN ALDENE.

Flora sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. She was silent for some time. But she was not given to long inaction, either in joy or sorrow. She was a swift and conclusive young woman. She turned and opened the little box that had come by mail. A sudden fragrance filled the room—the breath of the Springtime, the sweet smell of the arbutus flower. It lay packed in a bit of soft, damp moss, and upon it was also a letter.

I was walking in the woods to-day and found the promise which the divine power, whatever it may be, sends each year as a pledge that every Winter shall turn to Spring. I took it as a symbol—and I send it on to you. With it I send the call of my soul. Come—be my Spring. The world would say I am mad to love you, and more mad to tell you so. I

have thought of the world and resisted, keeping Winter about me, but as months have passed the thought of you has grown stronger, so much stronger than the thought of the world that I cannot be silent. Your fashionable friends would say that I am grossly selfish, but I know I was more selfish when I was silent, being a coward. How can it be selfish for a man to see the fulness of a life that might be too triumphant to consider lesser things? Will you come, and be my wife, and live? I will not deceive you nor gloss the picture. You will have poverty—stern, archaic. But you will have, also, love which will be archaic—and not stern. Is it not worth it? —to come out from the grind, the rut of life, and find the mountain top, and thus fulfil yourself? I will not do you such discredit as to ask you not to misjudge me in saying that. You know I could not be guilty of arrogance or egotism where you are concerned. Of course you understand I do not mean you would find yourself through me, or that my love would be the mountain top. I mean that the soul-fed forces that would come to you from the emancipation and triumph of your own character in choosing love would be its own Olympus. You would dwell with the gods by virtue of the God-like quality within yourself which had enabled you to give up all for love. I do not ask myself whether you love me. It is enough for me to know the fire of my own love for you. Choose to come into its warmth, and it will answer for the rest. Do you remember Dante? "True love will not suffer the loved one not to love." It is only the men who harbor fear, which perfect love casts out, who are humble. My love for you makes me too proud to be lowly.

STEPHEN READ.

Again the veiled face; again the silence.

Then a voice, sweet and low, at the door: "My daughter, how long have you been at home?" and with quick change of tone: "What is it? are you in trouble?"

For answer Flora rose and put her mother into the chair.

"Yes, mother," she answered. "Read these letters."

The mother read while Flora knelt beside her. When she had finished she said, briefly: "Two very fine men, of different types; both unusual."

"Yes, mother, that is why I am troubled. I must hurt one of them."

"You do not intend to hurt both, my daughter?"

For a swift moment the proud head touched the mother breast. "No."

"There can be no doubt about your decision, dear, for you are you—of course I know what it is."

"Of course."

"Come down to my room when you are ready; I won't disturb you now."

"Thank you, mother; I will write to him first."

After her mother had gone Flora stood a moment, a glowing radiance gathering in her eyes. Then she walked to her desk to write the luminous "yes" that was to transform her life.



AMOR SANCTUS

THE wingèd dawn above the sea,
Born of the night's dun chrysalis,
Is not so marvelous as this—
The mystery of her smile to me.

The splendors of the sea and sky
That men have gazed in wonder on
In all the centuries of dawn,
She lives but to personify.

Love sanctifies her, robes her round
With purity that has no stain;
And I, who have not loved in vain,
I know she walks on holy ground.

God gave her to my love, to teach
What heaven may be to one poor soul,
To lead me upward to the goal
That else were far beyond my reach.

A. G.



KNIGHTHOOD IN FLOWER

BEENAWAY—And what of Willie Puttipate, whose mother considered him a budding genius?

STAIDHOME—Oh, he turned out to be a blooming idiot!



DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE

SYLVESTER—I wonder if he thought twice before he married her.

FEATHERSTONE—It isn't likely. She was a widow.

THE TEST THAT FAILED

HE was toying with a curious little triangular dagger in a bent metal sheath. "This weapon," she announced, theatrically, "is poisoned. It really is," she continued, in a more serious tone. "It came from Mexico, and kills with just a scratch. What would you do if I were to plunge it into my breast?"

Her fiancé gazed at her uneasily. This was a new mood to him. In spite of the absurdity of her words, he seemed to read a purpose in her eyes. Superb in her evening gown, that revealed her magnificent neck and shoulders, she was leaning back comfortably on one side of a tête-à-tête, while he sat near her on a precarious, gilded parlor chair.

"What would you do," she repeated, "if I were to plunge it into my breast?" And seeming to suit the action to the word, she drew it forth from the sheath, waved it aloft and brought it down with a swift motion toward her chest. Like a flash the man's hand was in between. She turned aside the dagger in its course—but not in time.

In a moment she understood by his pallor. "Oh, Edward," she cried,

"forgive me. Did it scratch you? It wasn't really poisoned." There was infinite appeal and contrition in her voice.

The man rose slowly to his feet. "Why did you do this?" he asked. His face was pale.

"It was silly, I know," she answered, rapidly and nervously, "but I wanted—I wanted to test you—to see if you were brave."

"I thought better of you," he answered, slowly. "It is not your being romantic that I object to, but do you realize the risk you took? If I had not put out my hand then, as I had to force myself to do, however quick the action seemed, I should have lost both you and my self-respect, the two things in life I value most highly. It is not right to play with danger."

He was speaking sternly, in a voice she had never heard before, and she resented it. "Have you finished your lecture?" she demanded, icily.

The next moment she saw his broad shoulders disappearing through the door. "I wish it had been poisoned!" she exclaimed.

Roy M. MASON.



SUCCESS

I KNOCKED at the gate of my lord, Success;
I stormed his threshold with eager din,
I love him, the prize of my soul, no less,
But he barred the gate lest I step within.

And after, Love took my heart to mate,
And we built us a house in the wilderness.
A stranger is beating against our gate,
Crying, "Let me in! It is I, Success!"

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

AN IDYL OF GREEN WAYS

By William Lucius Graves

THE gentle ardor of a Midsummer sun had hardly dried the early dew before the feet of the lad who followed the windings of the beaten path. He walked slowly, with head bent and eyes fixed unseeingly on the wayside poppies, whose scarlet silken blooms he slashed off as he went with quick blows of a slender switch. He was perhaps nineteen, a graceful stripling, with rebellious gold hair that kept blowing low over his forehead, and smooth cheeks where the red showed clear under his tan. His eyes, when he raised them to gaze listlessly ahead, showed deep blue, like sapphires; but their clear calmness was clouded, as the mirror-like surface of a little lake is filmed by a momentary breeze.

The path he followed wound round the foot of a wooded knoll and then just ahead of him left the open and struck off through a sun-splashed grove of beeches, at whose verge, bough-shaded and grass-set, there was a fountain, a broad, shallow stone bowl held on the bent shoulders of three marble fauns. When the boy reached this he stopped and drank deep of the cool water; then he sank down on the grass, and finding it comfortable, threw himself on his back in the still shade, his hands locked under his head and his eyes shut. There was a long silence; only the shrilling of August insects pulsed in the air. Then he sighed.

"Oh, I grow so weary waiting and waiting, and never knowing! All day long I go about whispering her name and talking to her. And she—she laughs. Always she laughs."

A murmurous breath moved in the

boughs above him, and the bubbles in the fountain broke with an elfin tinkle.

"There is no girl in all the world so sweet—or so perverse. She will not say she hates me, nor yet that she loves me. And I, my mouth shapes a kiss each time I see her, my heart beats so I cannot breathe. Oh, sweetheart! sweetheart!"

For a moment he lay still, then suddenly pulled his hands from under his head and sat up. Somewhere in the air, fainting and swelling with the fitful wind, was the sound of a clear whistle blowing a little lilting tune that ran aimlessly on with many leaps and breaks, like the play of water over stones. The boy leaned on one hand and with parted lips stared wide-eyed down the path where it came round the edge of the knoll. The whistle grew louder, and of a sudden a girl came into sight, slim and elate, moving with a step marvelously light and free. She followed the path toward the fountain, her eyes on a bunch of poppies in her hand, and apparently unaware of her lover. Then, when she was within a few steps of him, with a pretty start she halted and gave back the gaze that met hers. You have leaned at a well's rim and looked far, far down at the water, with the shifting sun-glints in the depths: such dark wells were her eyes, with the gleam of fun in them. She had a cloud of dark hair, and her red mouth trembled with tenderness and laughter.

For a little she gave her eyes to those that looked up yearningly; then suddenly she leaned against the fountain, and dabbling her slender fingers

in the water, she dimpled at the moody face before her.

"Alack-a-day, what languishing is here! The world's a dreary place, indeed, and empty of joys! Why not bind your brows with cypress and forswear smiles forever?"

She threw back her head and laughed, a bubbling, tinkling rapture of inarticulate delight; but the boy only looked down and pulled up handfuls of the fresh grass.

"You are cruel to me," he said, in a low voice.

"I cruel to you?" with a surprised arching of the brows. "I cruel? I think it is you who are cruel to yourself."

She flirted the water at him provokingly from her finger tips.

"See how you stare at the ground when your happy eyes might be seeing themselves in mine."

"Witch!"

He leaped to his feet and pursued her as she fled choking with laughter round and round the fountain, till suddenly she darted to one side and stopped with her back against a tree, waving him off with motions not to be gainsaid, and panting to find breath for words.

"No, no, don't touch me, or I shall pray to the gods to change my shape, as Syrinx did. Small comfort you would have, I think, piping lugubrious airs all day on a reed. No. Sit down again."

"Ah, kiss me once."

"Sit down, I say, here by me, and we will both be very serious and talk about ourselves quite calmly and dispassionately."

He threw himself on the grass at her side, and she, without looking at him, put her hand within his reach. Presently his eager fingers closed over it triumphantly, as she knew they would.

"How old are you?"

"I am a man."

"Answer me! How old are you?"

"I shall be twenty when October comes."

"A prattling babe! And pray, does your father know how you go

mooning after a maid and singing love-lorn ditties to the weary stars?"

He flung her hand away angrily, and immediately caught it again.

"My father—"

"Ah, I see. He does not know. And now, what have you done in the world? The man whom I take for husband should be one whose name will sound loud in the ears of men." She clasped her hands as well as she could while he held one of them, and cast her eyes upward ecstatically. "What have you wrought, what far-sounding deed have you done that you should dare ask me to marry you?"

The boy looked at her doubtfully, but though her tone was full of mirth she did not laugh, and his voice was troubled when he spoke.

"Indeed, I do not know. You said once—my verses, you remember—but I'm afraid I have not done much. I'm afraid I shall never be famous."

"There, there, stop kissing my hand and tell me this. Suppose we were married: have you a house ready for me? We could not stay here at the wood forever. I think," meditatively, "I think I should choose a little villa just outside the city but within easy reach of it. There should be rose gardens, of course, and a vineyard, and inside the house should have a court open to the sky, with a colonnade of fluted pillars round it, and in the centre a fountain to sing for me all the time you are away. We should be very happy there. Tell me, is there a home waiting for the bride?"

He let go her hand and sat up, clasping his hands about his knees. His tone was one of utter discouragement.

"No, there is no house."

The girl leaned toward him caressingly, but straightened herself as he turned to her.

"So then," she said, "it stands thus! You, a child not out of your teens, would have me be your wife. You have not even told your father that you love me. You have not won yourself a place among men; there is not so much as a roof to cover our

heads! Do you not see that everything forbids me to marry you?"

"Yes," he said, in a trembling voice; "I did not think of anything except that you are so sweet, so dear. I suppose it can never be."

"All about me I hear the same thing," went on the girl, getting to her knees and spreading her arms wide. "'Wed him not,' the wind says, 'he is too young.' 'Wed him not,' the fountain murmurs, 'he is unknown.' 'Wed him not,' the poppies wave, 'he has no fortune.' Everything says that I ought not to marry

you—and for that very reason, if for no other, I will marry you! I love you! Do you hear? I love you!"

She leaned to him; tilted back his head and kissed him lightly on his curving mouth. Then while he struggled with joyous amaze, she fled away down the path fleet as a nymph. With a wild laugh the boy sprang to his feet and followed swiftly.

For a moment there was the sound of their flying feet on the hard path. Then they vanished round the edge of the hill.



ESCAPEADE

THROUGH the dull day with dragging duties filled,
And love long turned to service, I am thine;
Little of me there is that then is mine—
My thoughts, my hopes, are even as I willed,
Bound with sharp cords to thee; long since I stilled
The hopeless love that warmed my veins like wine
And made my life the symbol and the sign
Of steadfast faith, albeit by joy unthrilled.

But in the night, oh, in the night, my heart
Leaps from its leash, and down the ways of bliss
Wanders the world through wondrous flowery fields.
Ah, think not then that there with me thou art!
Dream not my lips lean upward for thy kiss
Or that to thee my soul its secret yields!

JOSEPHINE D. DASKAM.



JUST AS HE EXPECTED

WITHERS—I told Pokerbeigh he would play the deuce if he married that girl.

HIGGINS—Well, what has happened?
"She has presented him with twins."



HONORED IN THE BREACH

WILLIS—The New York policeman knows his business.

WALLACE—He has to know it. He'd lose his job if he did what he's paid to do.

THE WIFE

WHEN sleep unbars the gate of dreams,
 And night sets free those silent hosts,
 She walks again by sunlit streams
 With barren Hope's gray-hooded ghosts.

But when the day breaks, cold and dim,
 She leaves that gray-cowled company
 For her peace-guarded house and him
 Whose gentle minister is she.

Through the long day her little feet
 On tender, kindly missions go,
 And of that vague land, far and sweet,
 She fancies that he may not know.

But ah, he sees with love's own eyes!
 To-night he sits beside her bed
 And watches all her phantoms rise—
 Ghosts of dear dreams that long are dead.

He hears the wind in its patrol
 Kiss the wan beeches, towering tall,
 And sees, not whiter than her soul,
 The milk-white moonlight on the wall.

He leans athwart those silver beams
 And stoops to kiss her sleeping face,
 Knowing that in her gentle dreams
 He has no place, he has no place.

ANNE TOZIER PRINCE.



JUDGED BY THE OUTPUT

POET—There is poetry in everything.

EDITOR—There doesn't seem to be much in the poets.



FASHION FORTISSIMO

HEWITT—Do you think this suit of mine too loud?

JEWETT—Why, my boy, that suit would make a good selection for your graphophone.

SLEEP, THE RESTORER

By John Dickinson Sherman

“YOU are looking rather fagged out this morning,” remarked John Morton to his partner, Randolph Whitney. The two men were sitting in their law office on the thirteenth floor of the Battery building, and New York harbor, spreading blue and cool before their eyes, made the office seem stifling by contrast.

“I wouldn’t mind being on that boat myself,” answered Whitney, pointing to a steamer making its way to the sea.

“A good idea,” replied Morton. “Suppose you take a rest for a week or two. You’ve been working too hard this warm weather. I’ll take care of things; there’s nothing pressing, anyway. Get on a boat this afternoon and go up the Sound.”

“I don’t know where to go,” said Whitney. “If I did, I believe I’d take the hint and be off.”

“How about Rock Beach?” said Morton. “It’s quiet—only one hotel—no fashionables—fair fishing—plenty of fruit—a good place to loaf in and get rested.”

“By George!” exclaimed Whitney, “I’ll go. And I’ll get off on an early boat. I’m off now to pack up. I’ll write. Much obliged, old man. Good-bye!”

As soon as Whitney was out of the office Morton sat back in his chair and laughed.

“Make or break, survive or perish, kill or cure,” he said to himself. “If it doesn’t work he’ll never speak to me again; if it does, he’s mine for life. But won’t he be surprised when he sees his wife—he thinks she is still in Europe! And won’t he

curse me for an impudent meddler! If it turns out wrong, how she will hate me! I’ll suffer the fate of all peacemakers, I suppose, but it’s worth the risk. Here are two young fools bent on spoiling their lives. Neither one of them has done anything really wrong, and I’ll bet a house and lot to a canvas tent that they love each other as devotedly as ever. Yet they’ve virtually separated, and now they are talking of a divorce. She proposes it because she wants to find out how he feels about it, and he agrees because he thinks she wants it—both so sensitive and high-strung that they can’t get along like common mortals. Well, I’ve given them another chance, anyway. Kismet!”

When Whitney registered that night at the hotel of the little out-of-the-way Long Island resort he was astonished beyond measure and greatly disturbed to find his wife’s name in the book. His first impulse was flight. But he soon found out that it was the only hotel in the place and that there was neither train nor boat out that night. He left a call for the seven o’clock train the next morning, ordered dinner sent to his room and followed the porter up stairs, hoping with all his heart that he would not meet his wife on the way.

Of course he did. She was astonished at the sight of him, and they stared at each other consciously. She gave him a formal recognition as she passed. He replied with a salutation equally as perfunctory.

Whitney ate his dinner in his room. It was intensely hot; even Long Island Summer resorts are not always

cool. His physical discomfort aggravated his mental disquiet until he was sure he was the most miserable man in the whole world.

"Confound that Morton!" he thought. "He's got a hard nerve to run me up against a situation like this. Of course he meant well, but what business is it of his, I'd like to know? I'll break up the firm. I wonder if she's in the scheme, too. Not she; I'll swear to that. She's as put out to see me as I am to see her. But she'll think I wormed it out of Morton that she was here and tagged along after her to try to make up. I've got to stay and swelter in this oven of a room, or I'll run into her. My trip's spoiled; I can't stay here and I don't know where else to go. And my name on the register will set every tongue in the place to wagging. It's a wonder the clerks didn't show me up to her room. Confound that Morton!"

Even a cigar brought no balm to Whitney. It was too hot to go to bed, so he got into his pajamas, pushed a broad couch up to the window and lay down to brood over his woes and be miserable. But the couch was comfortable, he was tired, and before long he dropped asleep.

It was daylight when he woke. The first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was a young woman asleep on a lounge just like his in a room directly across a little court and not more than thirty feet away. It was his wife.

What a beauty she was! How had he ever been able to win such a lovely creature? No wonder he was no fit husband for her; no man could be. Her long fair hair, in two massive braids, made her look almost like a young girl. Her head rested on a silken sofa cushion and one arm was thrown partly over her face, the loose sleeve showing a glimpse of a round white arm. The tip of a little bedroom slipper peeped out from under her wrapper. She was apparently sleeping as peacefully as a child. Whitney sat and stared at her with

his soul in his eyes and a fierce tugging at his heart-strings. The love of the youth and the maid seems serious to them, no doubt, but it is only those who have loved and lost that know the depths.

Suddenly it occurred to him that she might waken and catch him staring at her. He reached up for the cord of the window shade and then stopped short. He left the shade up, lay down on his couch, threw his arm across his eyes, so that he might see without being seen, and waited for her to waken and discover him.

"I will see," said he to himself, "how she feels about me. She will think I am asleep, and if she hates me it will show in her face. It's a mean trick, maybe, but I'm not going to throw away this last chance."

Perhaps there is something in telepathy; at any rate, it was not long before Mrs. Whitney stirred, opened her eyes and sat up on her couch. Almost instantly she saw him. Annoyance was the first expression on her face. Here was a man who could look into her room if he should wake. She caught hold of the shade cord. Then she recognized him. Her grasp on the cord slackened. She hesitated, and was lost. She looked at him long and earnestly. Her face gave no hint of her emotions. But Whitney could detect no hatred in it. Suddenly she let go the cord, threw herself back on the lounge, covered her eyes with her arm, just as her husband had done, feigned sleep and lay watching him.

"Thank heaven!" said Whitney to himself, when she sank back on her couch. "At least she doesn't hate the sight of me. If she did, she'd have pulled down the shade." Then he rapidly revolved the situation in his mind, his thoughts running something like this:

"She thought of the very same plan that I did. She's doing just what I am, pretending to be asleep and looking with all her eyes. Of course she thinks I'm asleep. She wants to see what I'll do when I wake and discover her lying asleep."

After a reasonable interval Whitney moved, turned over, awakened, sat up and discovered her. Of course he was very much astonished. Naturally also his first impulse was to pull down the shade. He actually got hold of the cord. But he paused a moment to look at her. At first his face was stern and unrelenting, and there was distinct displeasure in his glance. Gradually, however, his face softened, his eyes grew kind, then pitiful, then tender. Admiration for her beauty showed next. Soon he was looking at her with his face eloquent with longing. Then, as if overcome by realization of what he had lost, he covered his face with his hands. By-and-bye he looked up with an expression of hopeless misery on his face and took hold of the shade again, but as if struck by a sudden thought he let go the cord, lay down, covered his eyes with his arm and took up the watching in turn.

"That may have been acting," he said to himself, "but it's a case of the actor's losing himself in his part. What a fool I am! I love her as much as I ever did, and I'll win her again if she gives me a ghost of a chance. But getting sentimental won't do now. I've got to keep my eye on the combination and do the right thing, and it's becoming complicated. Let's see! I've just shown her the state of my feelings, and by feigning sleep and letting her know that I'm watching her I have told her that I hope she will do the same in turn. Now it's her turn. She's got to figure out the situation from two standpoints—the one of a woman who is sound asleep and the other of a woman who has been awake before. Actually she knows that I am awake; theoretically she knows nothing. She knows that I am watching her, but she doesn't know that I know she knows. So, if she wakes at all it will be for the first time, and she must discover me. The first question is: Will she wake at all? That depends on whether she wants to go on with this comedy—or is it tragedy? If she wants to 'close the incident,' she can do so by remaining

asleep. Or she can see me, fail to recognize me and pull down the shade. Or she can recognize me and pull down the shade. Any one of the four will do the business. Which is she most likely to do? It seems to me as if I ought to be able to make a pretty close guess. She'll wake up; that's sure. To lie there asleep till the end of the game is commonplace, and nobody ever accused Sally Whitney of being commonplace. The second way would be crude and inartistic, for she couldn't very well pull down the shade without seeing me. She'll see me. And she'll recognize me, too. She'd rather be accused of murder than of stupidity, and it certainly would be stupid for a woman to see her own husband not more than thirty feet off and not know him. The question narrows itself to this: Will she draw the shade? It is likely she will see the opportunity in all its beauty and appreciate it. It's altogether too unique to be terminated by drawing a window shade. She is a woman who has just seen her estranged husband show that his love for her is as strong as ever. She has a chance to act in turn for his benefit. Surely no actress ever had a more interested audience or an odder stage setting. From her standpoint he will think it's genuine; he cannot know it's acting. And best of all, he cannot even know that she knows he sees it. So she can torture him or give him a glimpse of heaven—or both. If she hates him, she can show it, or fool him now, to tell the truth later. If she loves him she can still torment him, or she can meet him half-way and show him her heart. Whatever she does it's torment. But this I know: Being a woman she will not drop the curtain till the play is done."

Now it is not to be supposed that Mr. Randolph Whitney reasoned all this out clearly and collectedly and conclusively. As a matter of fact, he was so excited over the situation that it was all he could do to lie still and make a fair pretense of sleep. Still, the swift rush of thought through his brain, if it could have been captured,

arranged and put into type, would have read somewhat as indicated.

In the meantime it is to be presumed that Mrs. Whitney was doing some thinking on her own account. At any rate, in due time she gave signs of waking from a deep sleep. She tossed and turned and assumed a number of exceedingly attractive attitudes. At last her eyes opened. Soon she sat up on her couch. But she did not pull down the shade. Nor did she discover the man across the court. How could she see him when her eyes were never once turned in the direction of her window?

Now it is not every woman who looks pretty when she wakes in the morning; when one does it is her bounden duty not to waste her sweet-ness on the desert air. Perhaps this is why Mrs. Whitney sat so long motionless on her couch, buried in her thoughts. At any rate, she roused from them at last and took from under her pillow a photograph. At this she gazed long and steadily. Incidentally she turned it so it could be seen by anyone who might happen to be across the court. Finally she kissed it.

And then, all of a sudden, she happened to look out of her window. Instantly she discovered a man in the room across the court. An expression of annoyance showed on her face. She leaned forward and caught hold of the shade cord. Then a flash of recognition came into her eyes. In the very act of pulling down the shade she paused. Then recognition gave way to astonishment and astonishment to something kinder. Her face softened and her eyes grew tender until in a moment she was gazing at her sleeping husband with an expression that boded ill for the fees of the divorce lawyers.

Finally, as if struck by a sudden thought, she threw herself back on

her pillow, threw her arm over her eyes, feigned sleep and lay watching her husband.

"It's up to me," said Whitney to himself. "Now, what shall I do? She's lying there watching me and waiting for me to act. She knows I know she's watching. She's been awake before and seen me perform for her benefit, though she's pretending to be watching now for the first time. I know she knows I know she's watching. I suppose I can take my choice—act on her actual knowledge or her pretended knowledge. In one case I've already performed; in the other I'm still to show my feelings. I'm going to win her back if it takes all Summer. I'll—"

Rap! rap! rap!

It was the porter knocking on his door and calling him for the morning train.

"All right," cried Whitney, opening his eyes and sitting up. "I'm awake. Tell the clerk I've changed my mind. I'm not going on the morning train."

Then Whitney turned and held out his arms to his wife across the court.

"Randolph, dear, I've got a confession to make. I—I was awake before."

"I know it, sweet. And I'll confess, too. I was awake first of all."

"Are you very sure?"

"Oh, yes. It was mean of me, but I had the advantage of you all the time. It doesn't matter now, though; does it, dear?"

"No, indeed. But I do wish you hadn't seen me put your picture under my pillow."

"Why—I—I don't—you don't mean—"

"And—oh, Randy, I was so afraid I'd wake you when I pushed my couch up to the window!"



TAKEN AT THE FLOOD

By Beulah Downey Hanks

Idlewild, June 16.

MY DEAR BONNIE: I arrived here last night, and true to my promise, send you the first eloquent words from my pen. Idlewild is a beautiful place; I never pictured it half so enchanting, and I expect to pass a delightful Summer. We are about a mile from the city, away from the dust and far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. Caroline and Mr. Hallett met me with their splendid turnout. The horses are beauties, and your sister felt like a queen as we rolled along the broad streets, even if that little old five-dollar bill did constitute her worldly goods.

The house is perfectly appointed and very satisfying. I feel more at home in it than I do at home, if you can understand such a paradox.

I find Caro little changed. She seems to be the same dear girl as when we were at school together. Mr. Hallett is a gentleman all over, decidedly plain and easy to get acquainted with; at least I found him so. Caro is supremely happy. He adores her, and having an unusual amount of this world's treasure, has no trouble in expressing his gigantic affection. It is ludicrous that he should make such a goddess of Caroline—Caroline who in the days that are no more faltered by the wayside as early as fractions, and who never mastered the intricacies of an ill-fated waltz of Chopin's that fell to her lot, and which for four years she so cheerfully and so conscientiously slaughtered. He really worships her, and she accepts the adoration with the most beautiful resignation imaginable.

Dear little Bonnie, how heartless and cruel it was of me to come off this way and leave you to the same old grind! How cold-blooded those good friends of ours must have thought me when I spent the last hoarded penny for those vanities of vanities, and flew away from the sordid life like a frivolous butterfly, while you remained to wear the loathsome calicoes and to work your little body to death!

You, of course, from the bottom of your dear, fond heart, thought it was all meet and proper, and no idea of my monstrous selfishness dawned on you as you helped me pack the dainty silk-lined gowns, the picture hats and all the other folderol. But, Bonnie, on my word of honor, this time there was method in my madness; those lovely confections are my armor, and no man can withstand their charm. Do you understand? I have decided to marry for money, to embark on the treacherous sea of matrimony, and nothing on earth can deter me from so doing.

Don't drop a tear for me, but look at the matter philosophically. I am sick of flirting, illusive love-making—tired of sowing for others to weep, and all that sort of thing, and now that I have declared war I'll select a suitable party and make the campaign both quick and decisive; then you and I will both bid good-bye to poverty and its wormwood. Before I left home I thought everything over carefully. I am convinced now is the time to strike for liberty. I am twenty-four; it cannot be long, under the most favorable conditions, until I'll be twenty-five—ah, it is bitter

medicine to count the years! If I delay longer I may turn into one of those awful bachelor maids, and the selection will not be left entirely to me in the end.

When I think of having a great house like this, with servants and fine horses, and all the luxuries, and above all *you* with me to enjoy it, why, it becomes a small thing indeed to marry for money. After this lengthy explanation my heedless extravagance must certainly be forgiven.

Everything came through in excellent order, with only the sea foam green organdie a little crumpled and the flowers on my white gauze slightly crushed. Caro thinks my outfit perfect; she says all my dresses are dreams of loveliness, and so they are, if I do say it who should not. She admires especially the black net over the turquoise silk. No bride ever had a more satisfactory trousseau than I possess this Summer.

We will have a gay time for the next few weeks, with receptions, dances and card parties. Caro is going to have a german, which will be the event of the season. I expect to lead it with Mr. Hallett's brother, who is looked for almost any day now. He finished college about two years ago, though he didn't graduate; Mr. Hallett says he was all ready to, but with his accustomed irregularity failed to reach the goal. He is twenty-six; I am sorry he isn't thirty—men of that age are so much more interesting.

Caro says that he is elegant—nearly as nice as her beloved. I am glad he is distinguished looking, and then I haven't overlooked the fact that he is to have possession of quite a snug little sum of money.

It seems nice to be in a house where there is no skeleton. Everybody around here is apparently happy. Caro is always candid; she could not dissemble if she would.

I must go to bed now and get my beauty sleep. With deepest love,

Yours for matrimony,
CAPRICE.

II

Idlewild, June 25.

BONNIE, MY LOVED SISTER: I wish you wouldn't write such sad little letters about love in a cottage, of how contented you are when I am there, and of other uncanny things. My child, that is all fiction. You are working on your vivid imagination.

It is nice of you, Bonnie, to say I don't look more than eighteen. I think myself I don't show my age very much. At the same time I don't care to be taken for superficial eighteen, that shallow, shallow age.

You say you are anxious to know what I am doing, so I shall plunge right into the subject. Yesterday we attended a large reception at Mrs. Grant's. The flowers and the music were divine, the dresses and the diamonds were gorgeous, but the crowd was hideous, and struck terror to the bravest heart. I feel sure it was an "I. O. U." I always look on such things as direct insults.

And oh, Bonnie, a callow youth upset a dish of ice cream on my blue crêpe, and it is ruined. Nothing will take it out; we have worked for hours and hours on it, yet all to no purpose. Why do they let children out of the nursery so soon? And aside from destroying one's clothes, youngsters like that can do a marriageable young woman an awful lot of damage. You know how they forever hang round and keep desirable men away, and I invariably have the misfortune to have one dangling at my side. He has showered his attentions on me for some days—his mother says he is completely fascinated—that he has never cared for anyone else. I should hope not, at his age. He is so idiotic, he raves over my golden hair, my star-bright eyes and my lily skin till he fairly nauseates me. Yet he is such a boy! The disparity in our ages is appalling; I don't care to take a boy to raise and be the laughing-stock of the place. He cannot be more than twenty, and that is stretching it, I think. Imagine it, Bonnie—

twenty and twenty-four! Horrible! horrible!—I groan in spirit.

But I must not borrow trouble; I will have no infant prodigies hanging round when young Mr. Hallett comes. He has been unavoidably delayed for a few days longer.

You remember I told you there was no skeleton in this house. Well, I have detected a tiny little bone to-day. Caro told me some things about Ford Hallett, Mr. Hallett's brother.

About two years ago, while he was in New York, he fell in love with a chorus girl, and has been under a cloud with his relations ever since—that is to say, the relations are somewhat strained. You'd understand it better if you knew the family. They are the essence of pride, with regular peacock-blue blood in their veins; besides, they have a long line of ancestors to look to. I am glad *we* have such a good old name; it is a mighty factor in this household. Mrs. Hallett, Sr., so Caro says, is the proudest one in the family, and she has mourned over her son's love affair terribly; in fact, still watches him like a hawk. She must have a great deal of character, for when she heard of the reckless fellow's infatuation for the poor little *danseuse* she put on her hat and started for New York post-haste. And what a scene there must have been! Caro says Ford is stubborn and hard to do anything with, and the mother's determination is also superlative. She raved and tore her hair while her idolized darling laughed in her face. Now when Mrs. Hallett, Sr., found she could do nothing with him she did not give up, nor did she despair, but she went to the ballet girl and threw her blue blood and the mighty honor of her ancestors at her slippers feet and begged for mercy.

Caro said when Mrs. Hallett saw the girl she felt sorry for Ford, and her own heart was stirred, for she was a beautiful little thing, but of course she gained strength to resist her charms when she thought of the tights, and the spangled illusion skirts, and the vague rumors of innumerable champagne suppers.

Caro said Ford never knew his mother had that interview with Lolita, and when he went to the train to see her off he was fearfully defiant, vowing he would not give up his sweetheart even if his family never looked at him again. Mrs. Hallett, Sr., held her peace and kissed him good-bye in a most tender way.

One day, a few weeks after, he came home with a white face and hollow eyes, and told his mother Lolita had thrown him overboard, and he would never trust another woman as long as he lived. So much for diplomacy. Caro says—of course she wouldn't care to have me repeat it to an outsider—that he has always shown "low tendencies;" he is the only one in the family who isn't an aristocrat to the bone.

When Ford was somewhere in the neighborhood of seventeen he went to a fort to visit his uncle, who was a general or something big in the army. After he had been there about a week he fell violently in love with a soldier's daughter. This was an intolerable thing and not to be countenanced for a minute. Mrs. Hallett, Sr., was summoned immediately and very soon put a quietus on that youthful romance.

And now, Bonnie, I have decided to marry him; it will be a great relief to his mother, and Caro says if I can only bring it to pass she will be the happiest mortal living. Mr. Hallett says he'll remember me generously, too, for Ford has annoyed him world without end.

I am sorry Lolita has such liquid midnight eyes when mine are gentian blue; I am sorry she has such quantities of raven tresses when mine are yellow; I am sorry she is a graceful little tropical bird when I am tall and regal, and of the frigid zone. But a sweetheart is one thing, and a wife—well, that's different.

Don't think I shall treasure this story up against Mr. Ford Hallett. Not I. It happened long ago; besides, I have always admired men who have a history, they are so much more interesting than the other kind.

No doubt Ford and I will some day exchange confidences; perhaps I can dig up something equally amusing.

The "Boy" sent me lots of flowers this afternoon. They are beautiful. He certainly has faultless taste, but alas, they cannot take the awful greasy shadow of the ice cream off of my dress. Caro says he is madly in love with me. Most absurd Caro! Heigh-ho! twenty and twenty-four!

Pray for my success with the idol of the "House of Hallett."

Yours with love and great expectations,

CAPRICE.

P. S.—You will find my home letter enclosed.

III

Idlewild, July 5.

BONNIE, Ford Hallett is here. He came last night and I was ready for him. I had on my sea-foam green organdie and my white hat crowned with the exquisite plumes, and Caro said Ford could not take his eyes off me. He is very handsome. Tall, broad-shouldered, with dark hair and mustache, and the most fascinating eyes I ever looked into. I am glad I've decided to marry him; if this were not the case I should be an unhappy girl indeed, for I am more taken with him than any man I ever met. Caro says we look as if we were made for each other. This I consider a good omen. You think I am joking, but I was never more serious in my life.

Somehow I keep thinking of poor little Lolita. Her heart must have bled to have given up such a lover as this. No doubt she has found another by now. I am wearing all my prettiest clothes and looking my best, I think.

Last evening it was chilly, and so I put on my gray dress and gray toque. What an artistic combination that dress is, with its white satin and chiffon trimmings! It makes one think of a silver seagull.

We took a long drive, Ford and I.

As we drove along I thought to myself, "Bonnie has been ironing the whole blessed day, and now she is resting on the front steps with a tired little white face," and that thought nerved me on to victory.

We had a heavenly time; the evening was perfect, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. He did one thing, however, I did not fancy; when we were in the city he insisted on stopping at a street corner—and one of the principal ones at that—to listen to the Salvation Army rant for nearly a half-hour. I was provoked, exceedingly so, but I didn't say anything; it is just a trifle too soon to bring in complaints. He seemed to be greatly taken with the captain; she really was quite pretty and had a remarkably sweet voice, but he showed a frightful lack of something when he remarked he thought those ugly poke bonnets were beautiful. I can read him through as I would an open book; as a matter of fact, he was teasing me. Coming home he was charming. He is the kind of man who knows exactly what to say and the right moment to say it. He said he felt he had known me all his life; that perhaps we had met in some bright star in the long ago, and he vowed never to forget how I looked when he first saw me in the green dress with the pink rose at my belt. Bonnie, that is what they all say, but they don't all say it as he does. His manner is magnetic in the extreme. When we reached home he helped me out in the most graceful way, and as I walked slowly toward the house I was still under the spell of his dark eyes.

What was my disgust to see the "Infant" sitting on the porch, looking forlorn and dejected, and he had an enormous box of candy for me—chocolates, Bonnie, the kind you love. I felt like boxing his ears and sending him home, for a scheme had been forming in my mind to sit on the porch in the moonlight with Mr. Hallett. I think a girl is always at her best in the moonlight. But the boy has an angelic face, the sort to incite sympathy. He resembles a picture I

once saw of a young man who took the part of St. John in the Passion Play; moreover, you know my failing, how hard it is for me to resist admiration, so I stopped a moment to let him bask in the light of my smiles. And then he took advantage of me and did a thing I can never forgive—he invited me to go driving with him to-night. Now, the loss of one evening perhaps seems trivial to an outsider, but it is vital that I should have every minute to devote to Ford Hallett; he may not stay here long, or I may have to leave, or a thousand unforeseen events may occur. Caro was trying to entertain the love-lorn swain, but she said it was a herculean task—he was inconsolable. He is too unsophisticated to observe the yawning gulf of years stretching between us. I must get rid of him some way; however, it is a pretty poor sort of girl who cannot manage these small affairs. Oh, I don't intend to hurt his feelings; I'll deal gently with the boy. I've got to dispose of him, though. Mayhap he'll get the measles or the whooping cough.

Caro expects to give her german next week. Ford and I will lead it. I intend to wear my white gauze dress; he cannot resist its entrancing beauty, and will be compelled to surrender.

You will find my usual paternal letter enclosed. I think father can find no flaw in it.

Your devoted

CAPRICE.

IV

Idlewild, July 14.

I FOUND your letter at my place on the breakfast table—such a dear, sweet letter, just like Bonnie. There was a fragrant bunch of violets with it. Such chivalrous attentions touch my heart even as they touched the heart of the lamented Lolita.

What a lot of good advice you have sent me! I note what you say about flirting, you straitlaced Puritan; you think even a mild flirtation is a blot

on a fair maiden's name. And it is exactly like you to be more taken with my *bête noire* than with the man I am going to marry. It is your tender heart that finds you invariably on the hopeless side. His name is Robin Carey, a nice name, and suits him so well. It is *boys* in general I object to and not this one in particular. As to flirting, don't you know when a man has a heart it is constructed on an entirely different plan from a girl's? From reliable sources I learn that most men are heartless. Ten men have proposed to me, Bonnie, within the last few years—I do not refer to this conceitedly, but only to prove to you by results that my theory is not without personal proof. Nine of these men, who to all appearances were madly in love with me, are now settled in comfortable homes, dwelling in bliss with adored wives. And the other one, you know, is dead from natural causes. I used to think in days gone by if I could find one man who I thought would blow out his brains for love of me I would marry him. I have changed immeasurably of late. I don't believe Ford Hallett would blow his brains out for a soul on earth; he's got too much sense for that.

When I made up my mind to marry for money I never dreamed fate would send me such a desirable lover. I promise you I'll flirt no more.

I hardly know what to tell you first, so many things have happened. . . .

I am so sorry, Bonnie. I have only just started this letter, and Caro wants me to go driving. I haven't told you a thing. We are on the go every blessed minute. I'll wait until I get home, and then we will have cozy talks all about everything. I never could write when I am visiting.

I am glad father enjoyed my letter. How good he is! I don't see how he happened to be my father.

Ford Hallett has many of the symptoms; he is absent-minded, has little appetite, and takes lonely walks by moonlight.

You see, being in the same house, we are thrown constantly together,

and if we are not engaged before many days have flown it will not be due to negligence on my part.

Caro sends love to you, and says for me to hurry, the horses are restless.

Spasmodically but affectionately,
CAPRICE.

V

Idlewild, August 3.

MY WELL-LOVED BONNIE: At last the german is a thing of the past, and it was a grand success. I am so tired I can hardly hold a pen, but I must tell you it was enchanting. Ford was so attentive, and he was magnificent, the most distinguished-looking man here. I was the envy of every girl in the house. My cup of happiness was brimful, even if the irrepressible Robin Carey did hover persistently in the background. Everybody seems to admire him so much. All evening he gazed at me as an accusing angel might. Great heavens, what have I done! His mother treats me coldly, too. The world has come to a pretty pass if a girl cannot pick out the man she intends to marry.

Caro wore an exquisite gown from Paris. It was a surprise from Mr. Hallett. He is a king among husbands. The dress was a heavy white silk embroidered in gold and trimmed with real lace. It was the handsomest thing of the kind I have ever seen. She was quite imposing, and looked better than ever before.

My simple white gauze became me well. I was completely satisfied with it, but oh, Bonnie, is it not enough to try the patience of a saint?—that boy stepped on it, and the mutilation was awful; it is simply wrecked. If his mother doesn't melt and act a little less icy I'll send in a bill for damages. Ford says it would be perfectly justifiable. He was furious when he saw my dress, and called Robin a very hard name, and Robin looked at Ford as if he would like to kill him.

I am tired and sleepy, and cannot think. I am afraid you will not be able to decipher this letter.

Last night, after the guests had one and all departed, Caro and Mr. Hallett, Ford and I talked for nearly an hour; we reviewed everybody, what they wore and what they said. It sounds uncharitable, I know; at the same time it is such fun to haul the victims over the coals after an event of this kind.

Caro said she couldn't understand how Robin Carey had got so awkward all of a sudden; she claims he never was before. She feels sorry about my dress. Mr. Hallett lays the awkwardness entirely at my door, for he thinks the young man is so much in love with me that he cannot see. He says the first time he met his wife he distinguished himself by dropping a Welsh rarebit in her lap. But ancient history doesn't help this case. When I announce my engagement no doubt it will bring him to his senses.

Things are getting serious, my own dear little sister. At the foot of the stairs Ford clasped my hands, and with a very white face said he wanted to tell me something. I flew to dreams of love-lit eyes. You remember when we were wee girls, how I saved my cake and apples as long as I could before I would eat them? I am the same about this.

Yours wearily and happily,
CAPRICE.

The fireside letter enclosed.

VI

Idlewild, August 12.

MY DEAR BONNIE: This household is topsy-turvy, and all the members are furious. Mr. Ford Hallett, the Philistine, is desperately in love with the captain of the Salvation Army. He confessed to Caro, and the kind-hearted Caro sent for Mrs. Hallett, Sr., immediately; in fact, she is here now, and overcome by the blow. She declares he will bring her to the grave yet. Of course you are wondering what can be the objection to a Salvation captain. It is hard to make anyone understand it. Nevertheless, I do perfectly. Mrs. Hallett is a worldly

woman, also an ambitious one. It makes little chills run down her aristocratic back to hear him rave around; he vows he will don a red coat, take a big drum, march through the streets and make a great ado, if she says another word. I verily believe he is capable of such a performance.

I am not supposed to know anything about this; at least *he* thinks I don't. Oh, Mr. Ford Hallett is an accomplished flirt. He is still threatening to tell me what's on his mind. A great many things have dawned on me since Caro found out the devious "goings on." Why, every time we went to drive, which was almost daily, he insisted on going down where the Salvation Army was, where he would camp and gaze at that pretty captain; he would be quiet all the blessed time she was speaking, and when she sang he never answered a question I asked him. I doubt if he heard a word I said. Oh, yes, I see a great many things, and I presume his "low tendencies" will kill his poor mother in the end. But she says he is very susceptible, and thinks if she can separate them all will be smooth. She claims that he was just as set over the soldier's daughter, and acted insanely when Lolita deserted him. I should think she would feel guilty when she remembers what part she played in the desertion. Caroline says they all look to me for help in this trying hour.

But I assure you, Bonnie, after giving the matter due deliberation, I have come to the conclusion it would be a risky business to marry him. You see, his "low tendencies" might crop out any time; he might fall in love with the second girl, or his typewriter, or some vaudeville queen. I'd have to be on the watch constantly. Besides, I don't believe he has much of a fortune, anyway; it looks to me now as if his mother has a hand in it. I'd hate to be at her mercy. However, the next time he desires to tell me something I am going to insist on his relieving his mind.

I am about discouraged. It has been a pretty expensive campaign. My clothes are sadly damaged. Robin

Carey took me driving the other day —the second time I have gone with him—and though the clouds were heavy when we started, he drove so far we could not reach shelter before the rain came down in torrents, consequently my green dress is like a rag and my white hat a sight to behold. And there is a large hole in the heel of every single silk stocking I have. Silk stockings are the most perishable objects on this earth. As I said before, it has been an expensive campaign, and furthermore, I am convinced that clothes play a very small part in the mind of Mr. Ford Hallett, if a woman in a hideous bonnet and a shabby old blue serge dress has conquered his heart.

The Boy brought me a present this afternoon, a most extraordinary heart set with diamonds; it must have taken his pin money for quite a while. I suppose after all the havoc he wrought he wanted to get even in some way. When he asked me if I would accept it, I said "Oh, certainly!" just as if I had always been in the habit of accepting diamond hearts from everybody. Wouldn't dear father be shocked! He said he would like to have some sentiment engraved on the back of it, and I hummed, softly, "Twenty and twenty-four."

Later: Caro came in while I was writing, so I stopped for a few minutes. She thinks my heart is beautiful, but has taken my breath away. She says Robin Carey is worth a million dollars if he is worth a cent. If the heart *did* cost five hundred dollars, as she seems to think, I must return it, though it rend my soul. He is a dear boy, Bonnie. He has one of those open, readable faces—if a person were picking out a brother it would be impossible to find a better design.

I think I'll come home, sister mine; the family is so much upset over Ford, and I am disgusted with him also. You know I never did care for family wrangles.

Yours with fond love and vain regrets,

CAPRICE.

VII

Idlewild, August 20.

BONNIE, Bonnie, "there is a tide in the affairs of men." The strangest thing has happened to me—I am engaged to my boy lover! I've got rid of him, as I said I would.

I wish you could have heard him propose! Such a burst of eloquence it swept me off my feet. I was powerless before such adoration. And Bonnie, he swore he would kill himself if I wouldn't be his wife, and good gracious, his face showed he had nerve enough to do it. I never saw such a set mouth on a human being, and I feared he might have a concealed weapon on his person, so I said "YES." I didn't care to sail under false colors. I told him I was poor as a church deacon, all about the numerous interesting members of our large family, father's struggles and your blessed unselfishness. This avowal only fired him to new eloquence. I found out I could start on the million dollars whenever I was so disposed. After he got calmed down a little I spoke of the difference in our ages. I couldn't look into his eyes and be other than truthful.

When I made this confession he was shocked beyond measure to think I could be so mistaken. He is twenty-eight years old. Just heavens, how can anyone look so young and be so old, so very old! It is his smooth, frank face, together with the way he dresses, for he is several inches taller than I am. Since I have promised to be his I have found out a good many things: one is, he has traveled the wide world over; another, that he speaks five or six languages. How can anyone know so much and disguise it so admirably? His boundless money is an assured thing; his father is dead, and he left him the bulk of his large fortune. You should see my engagement ring—Caro has nothing so large or so handsome.

Dearest little sister, I am coming home; my mission on earth is ended, and we will plan for the wedding.

Mine, dear, must necessarily be a quiet one, as our funds have ebbed low, but yours shall be the most brilliant event ever witnessed; moreover, in the home of Mrs. Robin Carey.

Caro is delighted with the turn of affairs. She couldn't understand why I was so indifferent to the prize that all the other girls in this vicinity had striven so heroically to obtain. But she thought I had fallen under the witchery of the irresistible Ford, and of course longed to make a match between us if possible. She says, however, he is a pauper beside Robin. She laughed when I explained matters.

My heart feels a little sad when I think how good, how very good Robin is to me, and how much I am to him. This is the reaction, the inevitable remorse. I have never felt so toward anyone before—perhaps this is the awakening of that wealth of love you think I have hidden away in my heart. There, now, I do not want to be maudlin or sentimental.

I'll let you know in my next letter at what time I am coming home. Caro doesn't want me to leave yet, but since Ford fell from grace this is not the heaven it was.

Robin sends love to his sister that is to be. Bonnie, you will adore him.

In sweet contentment,

CAPRICE.

Afterthought—I wonder what father will think.

VIII

Idlewild, September 1.

MY DEAREST BONNIE: I leave for home next Wednesday. Lately, by some hook or crook, I seem to have got into paradise or some other place equally comfortable. I believe Robin Carey is responsible for it. There never was another Robin Carey, and there will never be any happiness for me away from him.

You who know me better than I do myself must realize what it means for me to acknowledge that.

I wonder if I can make you understand. The soldier's daughter, the fair Lolita and the Salvation captain turned out to be one and the same. *That* was what Ford Hallett wanted to tell me. You see, he thought I might help him to bring a happy ending to his troubles. He will never know what designs I had on him. You are the only person who knows, my trusted little oyster.

It appears Lolita left the stage so he would lose all trace of her, and she judged wisely. He did, though at no time did he relinquish the hope of finding her. In fact, he didn't give up his love for her from the minute he saw her face, years ago.

She had a frightful time to keep from starving to death, and finally drifted into the Salvation Army. The first evening Ford went driving with me he heard her voice. He said he thought he was dreaming, and then, alas! he saw her, and it was all up with him again. To think I never knew of the wild tumult that raged in his heart that day!

As I recall it now I remember how charmingly she raised the tambourine over her head, how archly she looked when she sang, how fearlessly and divinely she prayed.

Lolita was here at the house for a few days. She is beautiful, there isn't a question of that—positively bewitching, and don't you breathe it, she seemed more refined to me than Mrs. Hallett, Sr. Robin thought so, too. Poor girl! her life has been pathetic enough for a popular novel.

Now they are married—forgiven, and to-day are crossing the deep blue

sea on their way for a brief honeymoon. Truly Ford Hallett has fulfilled the promises of his boyhood; but no doubt this will end his "low tendencies." May they live happy forevermore! I hope Robin will be as devoted and true to me.

And now Mrs. Hallett, Sr., says Lolita was adopted by the soldier's wife. Take that with a grain of salt; at the same time, who knows but she may have royal blood in her veins? When I come home I'll tell you all about it.

Robin insists on an early day. I shouldn't wonder if he followed me on the next train. His mother is lovely to me and can't do enough for my pleasure.

Robin just came in—how my hand shakes! He brought you a beautiful present—guess what it is!

We shall go abroad for two years. His tastes are identical with mine. How could I have been so mistaken? Think what I might have missed! I have a helpless sort of feeling that his money didn't cut so much figure in the match, after all. I wonder if it did?

I don't believe any girl ever had so many flowers; he sends me exquisite white roses every day. I think it is lovely to be the first sweetheart, and he says it is loveliest to be the last.

My trip has been all that anyone could desire. Be sure and meet me at the train.

Yours with deepest and fondest love,

CAPRICE.

I wonder if we can reconcile father to prosperity.



TIGHT ENOUGH BEFORE

DOLLY—I shall have to get a new bathing suit made.
MADGE—Why so, dear?

DOLLY—Since I came here I have gained two pounds.

ROSES

NOT the bright petals of Provençal bloom
 Which the enamored troubadours once poured
 At courts of Love before those they adored;
 Not the resplendent blossoms that illume
 The ruined fanes of once renowned Fayûm;
 Not the flower-flames Damascus gardens hoard,
 Wherein is such a wealth of attar stored;
 Not English roses heavy with perfume!

Nay, none of these my fancy captivates;
 Rather the blossoms of the climbing vine
 She tends and trains with such a loving care.
 Their modesty her shy demureness mates;
 Upon her cheeks their tender crimsons shine,
 And round her hovers their sweet, wilding air!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



TROUBLES OF THE RICH

MRS. PARVENUE—The reason we stay longer in the country, my dear, is because your papa is beginning to make so much money.

GEORGIE—Say, ma, do you think we'll ever get so high-toned that we will have to stay in the country till it's cold enough to freeze you?



APPROPRIATE TO THE SEASON

SUB-EDITOR—I like the style of this writer; his story has quite a swing to it.

EDITOR—Then we'd better publish it with our hammock literature.



CERTAIN TO BE DISCREDITED

DOCTOR—This inactive life is killing you. What you need is excitement. Why don't you take an interest in public affairs?

PATIENT—Because everybody would call me a hypocrite if I said I was in politics for my health.

LE COMMISSIONNAIRE

Par S. Boucherit

LE cabinet de travail de René Langlois, avocat. Son visage, grave comme celui d'un travailleur, est éclairé par deux grands yeux bleus limpides et bons et égayé par un sourire gracieux et tendre. Sous l'homme de labeur, on devine un homme à l'âme sentimentale, au cœur délicat.

René Langlois vient d'atteindre la trentième année.

Maurice Pringeot, son visiteur et son ami—même âge—est tout autre: il est mis à la dernière mode, un gardénia à la boutonnière, les moustaches en crocs conquérants, ciré, pommadé, musqué, beau parleur, exubérant, vaniteux, plein de lui-même, n'interrompant son verbiage que pour donner dans la glace de fréquents coups-deœil et vérifier si l'équilibre de sa coiffure, l'harmonie de sa cravate et les plis réguliers de son irréprochable veston ne sont en rien dérangés. L'entretien des deux amis, commencé depuis quelque temps déjà, continue.

MAURICE—Oui, mon cher vieux, voilà la mission de confiance que je demande à ton amitié de remplir.

Est-ce dit?

RENÉ—C'est bien délicat. Il me semble que, dans un cas pareil, le mieux serait d'agir par soi-même. Si tu aimes sincèrement Mme. Dancourt . . .

MAURICE—Je ne l'aime pas du tout. Je la veux pour femme, oui. Mais c'est bien loin d'être la même chose. Cette jeune veuve, qui du reste n'est pas mal du tout, a surtout à mes yeux un mérite exceptionnel: une très belle fortune. Je ne me soucie qu'à moitié d'aliéner ma liberté pour une femme, même jolie, mais j'y consens pour vingt-cinq mille francs de rente.

RENÉ—Tu sais, mon cher Maurice, que je n'envisage pas du tout le mariage comme toi.

MAURICE—Une association?

RENÉ—Non, l'union de deux âmes!

MAURICE—Justement, c'est parce que je sais que tu cultives le "bleu" avec passion que tu ne vois dans deux époux que deux pigeons destinés à roucouler jusqu'à la fin de leurs jours avec la permission de M. le maire, que je te charge de peindre ma flamme à Mme. Dancourt. On m'a dit que c'était une femme dans ton genre, une rêveuse, une sentimentale, une éthérée. C'est un terrain si nouveau pour moi que je ferais, en y marchant tout seul, certainement des bêtises! Tandis que toi, tu pinceras de la guitare, tu chanteras une romance d'amour, au besoin tu lui diras des vers! Tout cela pour mon compte et sans que j'aie à me fatiguer. Et quand tu me l'auras ainsi conquise, j'entrerai en scène, et je ferai la reste!

II

RENÉ (*seul*)—Me voilà bien! Comment ai-je été assez sop pour promettre à ce fou de Maurice ce qu'il me demandait? Aller dire à Mme. Dancourt qu'il l'aime et solliciter sa main pour le compte de M. Maurice Pringeot! Mais c'est abominable, c'est insensé! . . . D'abord, je mentirai impudemment, puisqu'il m'a déclaré qu'il ne l'aimait pas du tout et que c'était pour sa dot seule. . . . Quelle horreur! . . . Puis, il me faudra vanter ses qualités. . . . Et où sont-elles, ces qualités? . . . Alors, je devrai lui en prêter qu'il n'a pas! . . . C'est de l'escroquerie! . . . Tromperie sur la qualité de la mar-

chandise vendue! . . . Le cas est prévu et puni par le Code pénal pour les échanges commerciaux, et ici c'est bien autrement grave! . . . Je vais induire en erreur une honnête femme qui s'imaginera qu'elle peut avoir confiance en moi . . . et je ferai le malheur de sa vie! . . . C'est odieux!

Aussi vais-je dire à Maurice que je ne ferai pas la démarche qu'il m'a demandée. . . .

Pourtant, j'ai promis! . . . Un honnête homme n'a qu'une parole! . . . Et puis, ce pauvre Maurice, il a l'air de tant désirer ce mariage! Sa situation, qu'il a bien compromise, sera refaite ainsi. En outre, il est, je le sais, sur une mauvaise, très-mauvaise pente, entraîné, j'en suis sûr, plus que corrompu . . . mais enfin il dégringole! . . . Or, Mme. Dancourt est une femme de tête autant que de cœur. Elle l'arrêtera, elle le charmera, elle le ramènera au bien. En somme, c'est une bonne œuvre et une œuvre amicale que j'accomplirai!

Allons, bon! qu'est-ce que c'est que ça qui coule sur ma joue? . . . Une larme! . . . Oui, c'est vrai, il faut bien que je l'avoue: c'est dur pour moi ce que je vais faire!

Car, enfin, depuis longtemps, j'aime Mme. Dancourt! . . .

Juliette! . . . Mais non, je ne dois plus l'appeler Juliette, puisqu'elle va être la femme d'un autre! Et c'est moi qui ferai ce mariage! . . .

Mais il ne s'agit pas de s'attendrir! À quoi cela servirait-il? Puisque j'ai promis, il faut tenir! J'étais, d'ailleurs, dans une impasse sans issue, puisque jamais je n'aurais avoué mon amour. Elle se serait toujours mariée avec un autre! Autant vaut alors que ce soit avec Maurice.

Courage! Il me restera le travail! C'est le bonheur aussi!

III

CHEZ Mme. Dancourt. Salon coquet. Mme. Dancourt, très-jolie, sans minauderie, élégante dans sa grande simplicité, le visage aimable et ouvert, est

assise sur une causeuse en face de René Langlois, qui paraît tout embarrassé et tourne son chapeau dans ses doigts.

MME. DANCOURT—En vérité, cher Monsieur Langlois, vous avez quelque chose! Je ne vous reconnaiss plus aujourd'hui. Vous qui d'ordinaire parlez si simplement et si bien!

RENÉ—Oh! madame!

MME. DANCOURT—Ce n'est pas un compliment. Vous savez comme je suis franche. Très-sincèrement je trouve un charme extrême à vos entretiens. Jamais vous ne parlez de futilités comme tant d'autres; vos sujets sont toujours élevés et traités d'une façon si délicate! . . . Eh bien! aujourd'hui, vous restez coi. . . . Vous avez l'air d'un écolier intimidé. . . . On dirait que vous avez une déclaration à faire, et que vous n'osez pas. . . .

RENÉ—C'est qu'en effet j'ai une déclaration à vous faire.

MME. DANCOURT (*vivement*)—Une déclaration? . . . Eh bien! osez!

RENÉ—Madame, il y a au monde un homme qui vous aime. . . .

MME. DANCOURT (*baissant les yeux*)—Ah! . . .

RENÉ—. . . Qui vous aime et qui serait au comble de la joie, si . . . si vous le lui rendiez un peu!

MME. DANCOURT (*très-tendre*)—Rien qu'un peu?

RENÉ—Beaucoup l'enivrerait! . . . (*S'exaltant*) Oui, madame, cet homme a su apprécier tout ce qu'il y a en vous de grâce exquise, le charme incomparable de votre esprit, la tendresse qu'on sent déborder de votre cœur. Être votre mari, madame, unir sa destinée à la vôtre, confondre ses sentiments avec ceux si hauts, si suaves, qui vous animent, vous consacrer toutes ses pensées, tous les battements de son cœur, suivre la vie la main dans votre main, dans cette fusion des âmes qu'est le vrai mariage, tel qu'il doit être—quel rêve! . . . Un mot, dites un mot, et celui-là, le plus heureux des hommes, viendra tomber à vos pieds!

MME. DANCOURT (*émue*)—Écoutez, mon ami. Une autre ferait de la coquetterie, jouerait à l'étonne-

ment et, toute ravie qu'elle fût, pren-
drat des airs réservés et mystérieux.
Moi, non. Je suis brutale dans ma
sincérité. Ce que vous venez de dire
me touche profondément et répond,
je l'avoue, au vœu de mon cœur.

RENÉ (*calmement et un peu froidement*)—
Ah! . . . Je ne savais pas. . . .
Mais alors? . . .

MME. DANCOURT—Oui, c'est vrai.
Mon pauvre mari, à son lit de mort,
après quelques mois d'une union très
douce et dont jamais mon cœur ne
perdra le souvenir, a eu le courage de
me conseiller, de m'ordonner presque
de me remarier. Ma conscience est
en repos sous ce rapport. Aussi j'ai
laissé venir à moi les propositions, et
je vous confesse qu'il en est venu
plusieurs. Je n'en ai accepté aucune.
Si j'admetts l'idée d'une seconde union
je la veux telle qu'était la première,
avec une conformité complète d'idées
et de sentiments; là seulement est le
bonheur, parce que là seulement est la
véritable communauté, source unique
de tout bon ménage; là seulement—
je dirai le mot—est l'amour! . . .
Alors, j'ai attendu. . . . Oh! beau-
coup m'ont fait des déclarations plus
ou moins bien tournées. . . . Le
seul qui ne m'en ait pas fait est précisément
celui de qui j'aurais voulu l'en-
tendre. . . . À celui-là j'aurais
répondu . . . en lui tendant ma
main, où j'aurais mis mon cœur.

(Elle lui tend la main. René la prend,
mais la serre à peine et l'abandonne.
Mme. Dancourt le regarde, étonnée.)

RENÉ (*se levant*)—Voilà ma mission
remplie, madame. . . . Puisque
vous m'avez compris si bien . . .
et si vite, je crois que le mieux sera
maintenant que cette affaire se traite
directement entre les intéressés.
J'ignorais que vos sentiments s'étaient
déjà ainsi précisés et que j'allais livrer
l'assaut à une place déjà prise. Excusez
mon indiscrète intervention, je
vous prie.

MME. DANCOURT—Que voulez-vous
dire?

RENÉ—Mon rôle était déjà assez ir-
régulier et assez difficile. . . .
Maurice aurait du moins bien fait de

m'avertir que la bataille était gagnée
d'avance!

MME. DANCOURT—Maurice! . . .
Qui ça, Maurice? . . . Nous ne
nous comprenons pas, monsieur!

RENÉ—Maurice Pringeot, qui m'a
prié de venir vous dire qu'il vous
aimait et qu'il sollicitait votre main,
que vous me paraissez toute disposée
à lui accorder.

MME. DANCOURT—Maurice Pringeot! . . .
Cet égoïste vaniteux et
sot, cette gravure de modes sans es-
prit et sans cœur, ce coureur de dots
qui recherche, non ma personne, mais
ma fortune, parce qu'il est à la côte!
C'est lui qui veut être mon
mari? . . . Mais jamais de la
vie . . . jamais! . . . Ah!
c'est pour lui que vous parliez!
Pauvre sotte que je suis! j'avais
cru . . .

RENÉ (*troublé*)—Qu'aviez-vous pu
croire?

MME. DANCOURT—Rien . . . rien.

(Elle porte son mouchoir à ses yeux.)

RENÉ (*très-émou*)—Vous pleurez?

MME. DANCOURT—Oui, je pleure de
honte de penser que vous, vous qui
me connaissez depuis longtemps, qui
auriez pu comprendre que j'avais
quelque chose dans la tête et dans le
cœur, vous avez pu croire, fût-ce un
instant, que je consentirais jamais à
être la femme de cet être! . . .
Voilà pourquoi je pleure! . . . Et
aussi pour autre chose! . . . Allons,
adieu, Monsieur Langlois! . . . Je
ne vous en veux pas, mais vous m'avez
fait beaucoup de mal!

(Elle s'effondre sur un fauteuil et
sanglote.)

RENÉ (*essayant de se reprendre*)—
Voyons, madame. . . . Pardon-
nez-moi ce que j'ai dit, et surtout par-
donnez-moi d'insister encore! . . .
Je vous assure que vous jugez trop
sévèrement ce pauvre Maurice: il a
des qualités . . . et entre vos
mains, sous votre exquise influ-
ence . . .

MME. DANCOURT (*violement*)—Oh!
c'est trop! . . . Taisez-vous, par

pitié! . . . Entendre dire tout cela . . . par vous! . . . Non, non, tenez, allez-vous-en! . . . Je vous en prie! . . .

RENÉ—Je m'en vais, madame. . . . Puisque vous le voulez. . . . Mais je ne comprends vraiment pas . . .

MME. DANCOURT (*lui saisissant les deux mains*)—Vous ne comprenez pas?

. . . Je vais vous faire comprendre! . . . Monsieur Langlois, après un quiproquo aussi douloureux, et puisque j'ai laissé échapper tout-à-l'heure mon secret, nous ne devons plus nous revoir. Sachez donc tout. Vous êtes assez loyal pour que j'espére que vous oublierez. . . . Eh bien! oui, j'aime . . . j'aime depuis longtemps . . . le seul homme, parmi tous ceux que j'ai vus, à qui j'aurais voulu donner mon existence et apporter le bonheur! . . . Je connaissais son intelligence, son cœur, et j'espérais, quoiqu'il ne m'eût jamais rien dit, qu'un jour peut-être . . . Tout-à-l'heure, quand vous m'avez parlé, j'ai cru que c'était pour lui que vous parliez. Et j'ai été heureuse, bien heureuse! Dans ma joie, j'ai livré mon secret . . . je vous ai dit que mon cœur était à lui, rien qu'à lui, tout à lui! . . . Mais, au lieu d'être vous-même, vous n'étiez que l'envoyé de ce Pringeot!

RENÉ (*tremblant*)—Au lieu d'être moi-même? . . . Ai-je bien entendu? . . . (*Tombant à genoux*) Juliette! . . .

IV

LE CABINET DE RENÉ

RENÉ (*seul*)—C'est donc vrai! Un pareil bonheur est-il possible? Moi, moi, le mari de Juliette! Ce que je n'osais pas rêver! Et elle m'aime! et par une adorable interversion des rôles c'est elle qui m'a offerte cette félicité céleste . . .

(*Il s'interrompt.*)

Sapristi! . . . Et Maurice? . . . Qu'est-ce que je vais lui dire? . . . Comment lui raconter? . . . Je croyais faire un mensonge, et j'ai fait une félonie! . . . Mais non, après tout! J'ai plaidé sa cause! Seulement, j'ai perdu! . . . Cela m'arrive souvent au Tribunal, et si j'ai gagné la mienne, de cause, c'est bien sans le vouloir. . . . Et puis, du reste, chacun pour . . .

LE DOMESTIQUE (*entrant*)—Une lettre pour Monsieur.

RENÉ (*lisant*)—“Cher vieux, si tu n'as pas été chez Mme. D—, n'y vas pas. Je suis enchanté de t'éviter cette corvée. J'ai trouvé bien mieux! Huit cent mille francs de dot et des espérances! La fille d'un banquier! Un rêve! Comme femme, elle ne vaut pas Mme. D—, mais c'est l'accessoire; le principal, c'est la caisse! Je te raconterai tout cela. Sais-tu ce que tu devrais faire, toi? épouse donc Mme. D—! Vous roucouleriez ensemble! Ce serait parfait! Veux-tu que j'aille lui parler pour toi? Tout à ton service.—MAURICE.”



TO ERR IS HUMAN

CRAWFORD—Many of us know enough to believe only half what we hear.
CRABSHAW—But the trouble is that most of us believe the wrong half.



NEVER MISSED IT

GERALDINE—You lost your head when you were here last night.
GERALD—Well, I could spare it; I had yours on my shoulder.

WHISPERING PINES

By Fletcher Cowan

I SAY, old chap," said the youngling at the end of the east porch to the elder who towered above him over the gambrel ridge, "do you like this Summer hotel?"

"I do not," snapped the elder, dropping a cone on the veranda roof for emphasis. "I'd move away from it to-morrow if I could."

"What offends you? I find things here quite interesting."

"Of course *you* do. In the first place, you are young," replied the Titan, crushingly. "In the next place, consider your altitude, compared with mine, and your limited range of vision. What do you see? The piazza and the reading-room, with a peep into the second-story parlor, and a bare one at that, from your corner position. Wait till you grow up, young man, and burgeon out until you command a whole façade of windows, as I do, and instead of finding things merely interesting, you'll find them too much so."

"Is that possible?"

"Quite. From your lower command of lawn and piazza you get nothing but the coquettices of young folk and the social platitudes of older fools making themselves strenuously agreeable to people they care nothing about. Here, above, I hold in survey the quarters where these people live and drop the mask, and I assure you, Pinette, far from it being merely interesting, I find it astoundingly absorbing."

"Then why do you wish to move away?" asked the youngling, innocently.

"Because," replied the patriarch,

"I feel it is not the true duty of a Pine to stand by and make a silent study of local color that is the rightful property of a Pinero. Shiver my fascicles, my mission is for nobler work than being either curious or ethical. I was born to wave my tuftings in the wind, to sigh and sough in whimsey of its mood; upthrow my silhouette against the rising moon, and fret the glory of the sunsets that poets rave about."

"It would be well if you would keep to that," retorted the youngling, "without peeping into the threadbare domesticities that end in deflowering life of all its honey and romance."

The big Pine stretched his limbs with an affectation of weary superiority, and said:

"Cherish your dreams, my strippling—I can never make you remember that down there by the piazza you see only the agreeable side of everything. The stock-in-trade conventions of society apparently charm you: the bow and smirk, the saunter and the dawdle, with all the concomitant Gatling-fire of small talk. In the mornings, gentlemen in duck and flannel, looking as if they had been tailorized by Ratsey, promenade luminously in the sunshine with seraphim in organdie and batiste. It looks so sweet and simple to you. In the evenings, the black tuxedo escorts the cashmere or the camel's-hair, and the ladies pause in conversational dalliance under the particular colored lanterns that sympathize most kindly with their various types of beauty. The gentlemen blow rings of cigarette smoke that the ladies spear mischiev-

ously with their fans. Everything is so delightfully silly and amateurishly devilish. Then palm-screened musicians within strike up the dance, and swirls of chiffon float as in a dream, while fond mothers sit without in the rocking-chairs wondering whether this is the last Summer they will be forced to bring the same goods back to market. It is so beautiful and romantic. Think of the sweet sincerity of it all and of the sacred troths that, after the dance, will be plighted in orange phosphates at the village store, with 'Kismet' for the toast, and the heart's epigraph, 'Love forever and a day!—especially a day!'

"Stop!" cried the youngling, indignantly; "you are trying to dethrone my ideals. I will not listen to you."

"It is not necessary that you should, my boy. An old man, Pинette, does not depend on a listener when he talks. He listens to himself and thinks his vaporings golden."

"You would have me believe there is no truth in love, no heart-and-soul affinity in joy. You and your friends, the Maples, may believe so, but I know better, and so does the Mountain Ash out there on the lawn. For years he has stood monitor beside yon arbor seat. He rears himself above it now all in the mellow light of afternoon, but at night, when the houselights fling shadow bars across the sward, he stands in an avenue of ink and possesses peculiar advantages for the study of heart spasms in their incipience. He assures me that love is love the wide earth over; that of all the cases that have come under his tutelage only one has failed to crown itself in marriage, and that was where the gentleman was suddenly ordered to rejoin the Asiatic Squadron and the girl hadn't imagination enough to fill up the void in his absence. He says, in brief, that love loves love, that all the world loves a lover, and that lovers talk sweeter rubbish than the birds!"

"Far be it from me," said the big Pine, icily, "to contradict a Moun-

tain Ash. I remember once having a decided difference of opinion with a Mulberry Bush, and, again, with a Virginia Creeper that tried to strangle me in my youth. I have occasionally a slight misunderstanding even with the Maples here, who sometimes, in their plebeian way, forget that I belong to the primeval aristocracy, and dispute my plume-rights. But for the Mountain Ash I have always had a deference and respect that justify me in characterizing anything it may say as the quintessence of twaddle, and if I could only get a whack at him with my Long Tom here I'd punish him for that insult to the birds. Listen! Do you hear that piano going in the parlor? That's that girl with the Psyche knot hammering away at 'Narcissus' again. Another insult to the birds."

The big Pine's manner now taunted the youngling into a feeling of insolent inquiry.

"You spoke about those windows you have command of. What do you see up there?"

"Ah! Really interested in something that pertains to my domain? I'll tell you. Confound that squirrel! He runs along the eaves here hour in and out and keeps my nerves on edge. Excuse those needles, please. They're from the sun corner. There's a leak in the flashing, and when I catch the drip old Sol comes out and moults me. Listen, and I will unfold to you my observations; and listen to them with attention, not with the condescension of a young man tolerating his father, for I'd have you know I'm no loblolly from the barrens, but a true descendant of the lords of Oregon. You must know that the architecture of this side of the house affects to be Colonial. I mention this because I once heard a wise guest say that every side was different. I won't describe the various styles of windows except to mention that one of them is a rose. This rose we may refer to later on. We'll look upon them all as frames revealing pictures. You

know the hour. It's five o'clock in the afternoon. You can always tell that, boy, by the long shadows that shoot across the tennis court. Don't forget that."

The youngling took the hint with the bored expression of a freshman. The big Pine resumed:

"The last brat in kilts has finished his race down the piazza, after the usual afternoon diversion of disturbing the siestas of his elders, and been called up by his governess to have his face washed. In short, people are now beginning to dress lavishly to go down to the supper, that will be first condemned because there is not enough of it, and afterward reviled as utterly unfit to eat, anyhow. Summer hotel guests are peculiar, you know. Using my gaze without impertinence, I see fair maidens pause during the interesting phases of their toilets to snap an extra chocolate wafer and chatter across transoms with their sisters about the eternal He. Young men of the age that is a little more than cigarette and less than brier root are stringing four-in-hands with the calm confidence of personal irresistibility, a satisfaction that has become to them almost monotonous. But we'll leave the inchoate and go to character. Now, I see in a certain window a man of forty-five who has fled town, not for his health, but to escape his relatives, which is the same thing. He is in mortal agony. All afternoon he has been tossing restlessly on his couch trying to read a novel by George Meredith, which the previous guest left behind, either through forgetfulness or fell design. He has jumped from the beginning to the end, from the end back to the beginning, and attacked it in the middle, working both ways, turning the book upside down for luck, without being able to determine yet whether it is a novel or a reflex of Professor Garner's monkey chatter. Later on he will tell his friends it is a great book and counsel them to read it. At present he starts up suddenly, hurls the book against the wall, lays the curse on his relatives and George, and

rises to dress. He opens his bag, for he bears all the evidence of a transient, and from the heart of many pink-striped, sleevey things that can be heard as well as seen he draws a white one, from which it is safe to infer that the gentleman's taste this evening runs more toward wearing the garb of the acolyte than that of the sporting man. Into the collar-band of this poetic garment the gentleman seeks to insinuate a stud. Now, it is a well-known fact in kinetics that the symbol of unknown quantity is the collar stud. It is popcorn sublimated, without the slightest surrender of the popcorn's natural *esprit*. And there is the illustration! Out jumps the ubiquitous button, with a diamond pip at that, and true to tradition, rolls over the floor to keep its customary appointment under the bureau! Is the man swearing? I do not know, but down he is on all fours, and down he would be on twice the number of hands and feet if he had them, in rampant pursuit of the missing jewel; and ever and anon stertorous sounds escape him like the intermittent explosions of a locomobile. But at last he has wooed the fugitive from its covert and stands erect, proud in the conscious power of man over the treachery of things insensate, when—what do you think?—he drops it again! Now I know he is swearing. Even the lace curtains respond to the convulsion that is going on within."

"Well," said the youngling, impatiently, "I thought you were going to tell me something tragic instead of trivial."

"Isn't that tragedy? If not, what is? See here, young man, don't go through life with your mind distorted by the idea that it is only the shedding of gore, or the imminence of it, that makes drama. The Homeric instance I have given you aside, as fine a tragedy may be written on a bottle of milk as on a bucket of blood. Take the mother with her child. It's top gallery, I know, but that's because it's human. On the one side Herod and the slaughter of the innocents, on the other papa and the weary vigils

given to the proper conduct of the gas stove and the sterilizer! I say no more. Next to the window of Ulysses I see a spinster lady of fifty 'making ready' and putting into her work a conscience that shows she has not lost faith in the idea that she may yet arrive. How beautiful is faith!"

"Excuse me. But aren't you getting just a bit digressive?"

"Digression, my boy, is the sovereign privilege of age. It is its holiday. Where would be the inducement to live until my years unless I had the certainty that I could make myself mortally tiresome to my friends? Kindly do not interrupt me. At the next window frame is an interesting kit-kat of a man and his wife. The wife is arranging her hair, and the man his accounts, with a lead pencil. The man is in earnest converse with the wife, and the wife liketh not the tenor of his song, which is money and the reiterated citation of household expenses. These he dinneth industriously into the lady's ear, citing her as the grand extravagancer and himself as a martyr to penury and humbleness, while happy children dance around them, making both more miserable. Why will man take the rose-bloom off the lives of his nearest and dearest by the quotation of finance? I pause for a reply. So doth he, and getting none, straightway he hieth to a room contiguous, where patient bachelors, with colored chips and high-ball Scotch, await his coming. And there, seating himself again at the table, he raiseth the limit of the game."

"But—"

"You want something more pleasant, I know; but not just yet a bit. We're on the realistic now. Passing over the checker of frivolous women decking themselves for the evening's conquests, we come to a sad case. It is that of a once very successful man, who, ruined by unfortunate investments and down with the acutest form of nervous prostration, is having his last moments soothed by his wife, who is reading to him 'To Have and To Hold.'"

"Out on this evasive rubbish!" cried the youngling, desperately, "and stand by to explain your innuendoes. When you spoke of Pinero a little while ago, did you mean to hint that there were any Tanquerays or Ebbsmiths in this house?"

"Well, I won't say that exactly, but there's excellent stage material for the same. This brings me to the rose window I promised to refer to. I don't mind telling you now that I had intended to get out of mentioning it again, if possible, purely in deference to your feelings, but since you insist on knowing the worst, I don't see how I can deny you. You must know that the rose window opens from one of the corridors of the house. Its primary mission was to let in light. Its ultimate one has been to let out secrets. Now wait for the breeze, and when you blow up and I blow down, catch my confidence. In the room to the right of the rose a man is sprucing himself before a mirror, with the sole view of meeting in the evening another man's wife!"

"What!"

"I thought that would shatter you. And in the room to the left of the rose is the woman, lancing carnations through her hair; in other words, preparing to meet the man, who, by the way, is another woman's husband."

"I don't believe it!"

"I don't give a tinker's anathema whether you do or not. Now, piquancy aside—which has its relish, for, though I'm old, there's a tremor of the human left in me yet—isn't that an outrage?"

"If what you say is true, it is."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. And understand, my indignation is genuine. Now, if I were that man, I should probably be guilty of the same impropriety, for the lady is young and of surpassing beauty, and would justify any act of folly; but I always put myself in the deceived man's place, Pinette. Therefore, I tell you frankly if I were not he it would be delightful; but if I were, and scented the mischief, something would drop! Yet somehow this is a case to linger

over. The others I have cited have been rich in the nothing-doing quality of realism so dear to Mr. Howells; but here is a passion phase in the vein of Daudet or Halévy, whose books I've read so often as they lay on the piazza chairs, and I assure you this whole affair has, so far, been as neatly conducted as either of those masters would have treated it. I writhe with indignation and would stop the mischief if I could, but my artistic soul says, 'Watch it out. Study its flavor. Await the dénouement. Even help it along, so that, no matter how it end for them, society be not cheated of its sensation; for, in matters of this kind the public has its rights.' Oh, don't be frightened. There will be nothing sanguinary in the climax. In these days of civilization we no longer seek the shambles for redress but the balm provided by our good Pine sisters of South Dakota. Hold a moment! What do I see? My lady leaves her room and pauses in the hall. She takes a flower from her corsage and casts it through his fanlight with accuracy most unwomanlike. It is a signal. He, too, comes forth. They stand together in the corridor. I do hope they'll keep up the delicacy of the French school. She takes the flower from his hand and fixes it in his lapel. Ah, pretty!—very pretty! and—by heaven, Pinette, *he's kissed her!*"

With that the plumage of the big Pine leaped pompadour and the Pinette was almost uprooted by the vacuum.

"I'll not believe it!" cried the youngling, as his breath came back to him. "You play on my credulity. I cannot think so ill of human nature, because I know it's better. You see the world through yellow glass. I see with healthier vision. Now hear my tale. Only the other day a man paused here and carved on me the Christian initial of his sweetheart's name."

"I know the man. He struck a match on me."

"Consider that he honored you. That man is coming down the veranda now, and the woman of his heart is with him. Fair is she, and he graced with lordliness of figure. Oh, how they are in love! You wonder how I know so? I've watched them time and time again, and when a couple truly are in love it needs no Merlin's gift to read within their souls the light that never was on sea or land."

"That's remarkably fine language you are using. Is it your own?"

"I use the language of the human heart voicing its virgin impulse," replied the Pinette, with haughtiness. "The love I speak of is tender, sacred. Compare these lovers with those that you have pictured. It is the contrast of the spiritual and the material. Not theirs the reckless impulse of flaunting in the light of day the roll of goo-goo eyes. Those optic paroxysms are kept for their sweet privacy. So modestly they love, 'tis only after twilight that one hand seeks another, all in the singing hush of night when the call of the whippoorwill is heard in echo land."

"Beautiful! beautiful!"

"Then they sit here beneath me on the wattle chair, a-steep in shadow, living through eternities; just listening to the katydids; just gazing at the fireflies and thinking them forget-me-nots; just keeping busy with silent lip-laps, until his cigar goes out. Ah! it is beautiful, and beautiful because it is so honest and so pure! Such a tonic to think of after all that you have told!"

A breeze came up, and the big Pine, shaking down his pompadour, said in a kinder tone than any he had used before:

"You have in you the making of a good minor poet, Pinette, but a poor philosopher. Sorry to disillusionize you, but the couple in the wattle chair are the missing partners of the twain at the rose window."



BY POSTAL CARD

A LITERARY FLIRTATION

IT began by the literary girl sending what she thought was a joke to the editor of the comic monthly.

He promptly returned it with a single word scrawled across it in blue pencil—"Old."

"So are you," she answered by postal the same day.

"Do you think so?" he scribbled under a photo of himself that he sent to her.

"Not at all!" came the shy answer, after she had admired its good points.

"Are you?" Evidently this editor wanted to know things.

"What woman is?" was the enigmatic sentence on the postal.

"Prove it." This young editor was nothing if not insistent.

"Here 'tis." And the photographs of some literary girls are not half bad.

"Very fine," was as much as he dared say by postal.

"Same to you!" And the girl thought the queer matter closed.

"Why don't you write at length?"

"Can't."

"Why not?"

"Am otherwise engaged."

"To whom?"

"My future husband, you silly! My postals have given out. Good-bye!"

ANNA COSULICH.



PRUDENT HEIRS

THERE are some who, inheriting fortunes free,
Show closest discriminations,
And prune their genealogical tree
By cutting their poor relations.

DOROTHY DORR.



SWEET CONSOLATION

MRS. COBWIGGER—You must feel dreadful about having your bric-à-brac stolen.

MRS. PARVENUE—Yes, my dear, but I realize that it was the act of a kleptomaniac. I'd have felt awful if a common thief had taken it.

A TRICK OF THE TRADE

By Curtis Dunham

PEG WOFFINGTON, standing on the mantelpiece, dainty and graceful in her garb of bisque, seemed to be smiling at her congenial surroundings. Her standpoint suggested that of the prompter's box, with the stage set for the cozy interior scene of a rural play in the seventeenth century. "Down centre," within a yard of her, was a breakfast table invitingly laid for two, with unopened letters beside each plate. But Peg's eyes did not rest on this evidence that the curtain was about to rise. Her gaze was fixed on the charming country landscape visible between swinging windows, "back," which opened on a broad veranda cool with clinging vines. In all other respects the stage setting was appropriate, and while dainty bisque Peg continued to smile approvingly it only remained for the actors to make their entrance.

And when the heroine presently entered, "up L," the illusion was heightened rather than destroyed, though the landscape visible through the swinging windows was that of a valley in Westchester County at this present day, and the heroine the modest heiress of a deceased country clergyman. But she was absolute mistress of this bit of Elysium, and although she was only three months from school and had set foot within a playhouse just four times in her life, was she not bride of a month to Spencer Jordan, who had played *Romeo* to the world-famous *Juliet* of his cousin, Sylvia Grahame? And in his wooing of her had not Spencer declared that she was Nature's own ideal for the fair daughter of *Capulet*?

Moreover, had she not already, with encouraging results, opened communication through the mails with her new and famous relative, Sylvia Grahame, with a view to compelling the world to coincide with Spencer's rash admission of her gifts? She had never met Sylvia, but that great joy was now imminent, for recent advices had set forth that the actress had returned from her annual trip abroad and established herself in her Madison avenue apartment.

So the manner of Grace Jordan's entrance on this pleasing scene is so conventionally correct, according to the best stage traditions, that the smile of the bisque Peggy seems to grow still brighter in approval and admiration of her. She wears a flowing morning gown adorned at the breast with a bunch of yellow roses. She approaches the breakfast table with measured, graceful step, and standing by her chair, calls in clear tones, nicely modulated:

"*Romeo, Romeo!*"

Receiving no answer she glides to the swinging windows and repeats the summons.

"Perhaps he's in the garden," it is plain she is saying to herself as she raises her voice and calls once more.

There being still no answer she seats herself at the table, and while she opens her letters Peg on the mantelpiece distinctly hears her say:

"I know—Spencer's sulking. Until this morning he thought I was joking about going on the stage. Now he realizes the inevitable. What! I go on rusting in this country hole—I, with a favorite leading

man for a husband and 'the greatest *Juliet*' for a cousin? Absurd!"

Now her eye has caught the significance of the letter she has opened, and she reads aloud:

"Your income from various sources for the current year will amount to about \$4.500, provided the X, Y & Z does not pass its dividend—

"The X, Y & Z had better not pass its dividend," comments the reader, in tragic tones, and continues:

"As to your expressed desire to sell your charming homestead, we earnestly beg that you will not think of such a thing.

"Your obedient servants,
"GETTEM & KEEPEM."

Whereupon Grace stamps her little foot under the table and remarks, with determination:

"But I *will* sell the farm. I *won't* go on raising chickens. I didn't marry an—an—incubator. Spencer's had his career, I'll have mine. He has played *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Sylvia Grahame; he shall play *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Grace Jordan. That's settled."

By this time she had opened another letter, which she reads aloud for the benefit of Peg:

"I don't want your farm, but I'll take it to oblige you. I'll give you \$9,000. It's worth twice that. You'll be sorry some day. Then I'll sell it back to you for \$12,000.

"YOUR UNCLE BILL.

"The wretch!" is Grace's comment. "But I'll take his \$9,000. It will pay for the scenery and costumes. Spencer has said that I realize his ideal of *Juliet*, and now he shall help me prove it to the world!"

Whereupon Grace rises and declaims:

"Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!"

There is an interruption of a nature somewhat disconcerting. Spencer enters through the swinging windows, looking as unlike the gallant *Monta-*

gue as possible. His shoes are dusty and there are straws clinging to his hair and clothing. His collar is guiltless of necktie, and there is a jagged rent in one coat sleeve. As he advances to his place at the breakfast table he remarks:

"Well, here's a pretty how-de-do. What do you think, Gracie? The speckled hen is trying to set again!"

"The speckled hen!" repeats Grace, in tones of deep contempt.

To which *Romeo* replies, with his mouth full:

"Yes. I caught her at it just now—out back of the barn. She doesn't seem to recognize our new incubator. But I gave her a bad half-hour. Chased her all over the yard. Told her plainly her business was to lay eggs, not to hatch 'em. Informed her that I'd be responsible for the hatching—apologized for not being able to attend to the laying, too. Argued with her about the sin of wasting her time keeping warm a lot of porcelain door knobs. Called her attention to the example of the little busy bee. But she didn't seem to take it in the right spirit. So I soused her well in the horse trough. She's the wettest hen you ever saw. Whew! but I'm angry. Hello! Anything wrong, Gracie?"

As Spencer pauses with his fork raised, regarding with alarm the tragic aspect of his young bride, Grace simply ejaculates, in tones to match, "The speckled hen!"

"Why, what's up, darling?"

"Spencer," says Grace, with evidences of genuine indignation, "I have been deceived. I fondly thought you had a soul—a soul above speckled hens. It's barely a month since we were married, and already you've settled down into a—a regular hayseed. You—y—you, who have played *Romeo*!" And she holds her handkerchief to her eyes.

There is but one thing for Spencer to do, and he does it. He takes Grace in his arms, strokes her fair hair and speaks from his heart in tones melting and mellow.

"Darling, forgive me. This new

life, after the tinsel and turmoil of the stage, seems like paradise to me. It is heaven—with your sweet eyes, your dear lips, your loving heart all my own. Last night I woke in terror, thinking it was all a dream, that I was back in the old, feverish, unsettled, unhappy pursuit of the bubble reputation. Just then you moved in your sleep, and the spectre vanished. You were my angel of peace. Darling, this sweet retreat that you have brought me is heaven's own setting for our love. In it you——"

But Grace pushes him away, though gently, resumes her place at the table and completes the sentence in her own wilful way:

"In it I am a simple little country girl, an innovation that has caught your passing fancy—along with—the speckled hen."

"Gracie!"

But Spencer makes no further protest. He is opening a letter, and as he does so he smiles covertly at the discontented face opposite him, as if the letter had reminded him of well-laid plans now near fruition. Grace brightens, too.

"Is it from Cousin Sylvia, dear?" she asks.

"Yes, just a line saying we may expect her to-day."

"Now that's too lovely! Does she say anything about the servant she promised to send us—her old servant, Gretchen? We need her terribly."

"Yes, here it is," and he reads:

"Gretchen has finally consented, though she has grave doubts about country life. She's quite spoiled, you know. For three years I haven't had a word to say about the management of my own flat. Gretchen knows all my affairs from beginning to end. She loves to gossip about 'the profession.' I hope Grace won't mind her familiar manners, in view of her excellent qualities as a servant. She can do everything. She should arrive soon after you get this letter. I will ride over on my wheel from Larchmont, arriving about noon."

While Grace is dancing about in a state of ecstasy over these tidings Spencer rises from the table, winks

once solemnly at Peg, and joins Grace near the window. Just then she says, excitedly:

"Here she comes!"

"Who? Sylvia?"

"No, Gretchen."

"By the front way, I'll bet."

"Yes," laughs Grace; "you'd better escape by the kitchen."

"I will," says Spencer; "I'll go and have a look at the pigs." And he goes.

As Gretchen enters by way of the veranda, Grace perceives that she is all Sylvia Grahame has described her to be. She carries an umbrella and a large carpet bag, which she places on a chair, and announces herself:

"Compliments of Miss Gretchen Schmitsberger. Yes."

"You come from my cousin, Sylvia Grahame?" asks Grace, determined to live up to the hints in Sylvia's letter.

"I introduced myself already just now. Yes. Also with compliments of Miss Sylvia Grahame, the greatest *Juliet* ever. Maybe this ain't the right place? What is your name?" All of which is remarked in the most placid tones.

"I am Mrs. Spencer Jordan," says Grace. Whereupon Gretchen seizes her hand and shakes it.

"Yes. That was right. We talk business pretty quick, in a little while, maybe. Oh, my! it was warm by the road from the station."

Grace cannot stifle the temptation to make one satirical retort.

"Pardon us for not sending the carriage," she says.

"Oh, I excuse you," says Gretchen, affably, taking a comfortable seat and removing a nondescript bonnet from her mass of yellow curls. "You was going somewhere? Yes?"

"No, I shall be at home all day."

"Maybe you better sit down, then."

Grace obeys mechanically. Gretchen crosses her knees comfortably, exhibiting a very flamboyant stocking, at which she observes Grace to be looking with some interest.

"Yes. It was a pretty stocking, ain't it?"

"Rather warm, I should think."

"Oh, not so warm," says Gretchen, with an impudent smile.

"I trust, Gretchen," says Grace, with dignity, "that you are not addicted to slang?"

"If it was slang, all right. I speak the words of the greatest *Juliet* ever."

"Do you want me to believe," says Grace, with indignation, "that Sylvia Grahame uses such vulgar expressions?"

"Oh, that was the way in our profession," answers Gretchen, complacently. "We peoples of the stage don't put on so many airs. Yes. We do what we like. We say what we please between ourselves off the stage. Sure. You speak about the stockings already. Sylvia Grahame gave them to me. Yes. One day they came—six pairs in a box—while we have a lunch party in the flat. The gentlemen open the box and make neckties of the stockings."

"Oh!" gasps Grace.

"Yes. But Sylvia won't have such actions. She puts on a pair—"

"Stop! stop!" says Grace, in horror. "Not right, there before everybody?"

It was now Gretchen's turn to be dignified. She draws herself up stiffly and says:

"There was a limit, of course. The gentlemen turned their backs."

"Did Sylvia's husband consent to this—to this—?" gasps Grace, unable to continue.

"Excuse me," says Gretchen, who appears to be startled. "You speak of the husband of the greatest *Juliet* ever?"

"Yes; surely he must have been offended at this—this—?"

"Oh," returns Gretchen, with a sniff, "we have no use for husbands."

"You mean that Sylvia's husband was not at home on the occasion of this extraordinary scene?"

"Oh, yes, he was home all right."

"And he was not indignant? He made no objection?"

"That was impossible. He know nothing about it."

"But you said just now he was at home."

"Sure. By his boarding-house in West Thirty-fourth street."

"Oh, dear!" sighs Grace. "Have they separated?"

"Separated?" demands Gretchen, open-eyed. "What for?"

"But it seems they don't live together."

"Oh, yes," says Gretchen, indifferently, "I guess they live together—sometimes when nobody was looking."

"Gretchen, this is awful! You know they're married."

Gretchen shakes her head dubiously while driving Grace distracted with the ready admission:

"Sure they was married all right."

"Goodness gracious! Then why doesn't he stay at home with Sylvia in her flat?"

"Oh, my!" ejaculates Gretchen, much shocked. "Oh, my, that was not respectable!"

"What!"

"Oh, my! What would people say?"

"What could people say?"

Whereupon Gretchen shakes her head slowly at Grace and says:

"I guess you ain't very well acquainted with our profession. Yes. In our profession if you have a husband, keep it quiet. Never speak about it."

"I shall be acquainted with your profession very soon," responds Grace, angrily. "Sylvia Grahame has promised to teach me. I shall have my own company. I shall have my husband with me always. He shall be my leading man. I shall be *Juliet* and he shall play *Romeo*."

"Oh, what a scandal!" says Gretchen, wringing her hands. "It will be in all the papers, with pictures. Yes. Oh, my!"

"Scandal?"

"Sure. *Juliet* with a husband! Ach, himmel! Ach, what a scandal!"

There are evidences that Grace is weakening. But she declaims for Gretchen some lines from the part of *Juliet*, and asserts that genius can overcome all—even the existence of a husband. Gretchen listens to the recitation, and says, doubtfully:

"Yes, that was good—except the feet."

"What is the matter with my feet?" demands Grace.

"I speak about the feet of the ladder."

"You mean that I must begin at the bottom of the ladder and climb up? Ordinarily that is the case, I admit. But where there is genius—"

"Oh, that makes no difference. Sylvia Grahame was in the 'Black Crook' already. Yes."

"Sylvia Grahame in the 'Black Crook'!"

"Sure. Also she was three years dancing in the Bowery."

"Oh," gasps Grace, sinking into a chair, "Spencer never told me."

"Of course, everybody knows all about it. When you are *Juliet* you must be everything else. Sure. You should see Sylvia Grahame stand on her head every morning for practice. Like this—"

"Stop! stop! Someone might come."

"All right. Can you do the kangaroo dance?"

"I never heard of it."

"Oh, that was sad. Every time you play *Juliet* you must dance it for an hour—to make the body soft. Yes. I will show you."

Gretchen dances with a simpering, lackadaisical expression and extravagant motion of the hands and arms, with uncouth leaps and bending of the body, while Grace watches her with growing disgust expressed in her features.

"Yes," says Gretchen, as the dance ends, "yes. You should see Sylvia Grahame do it."

"I have no desire to see Sylvia Grahame do it," responds Grace, in icy tones. "Perhaps now you will be good enough to come with me to the kitchen."

"Sure," says Gretchen, taking her umbrella and bag. "That was business."

"It is now nearly time for luncheon," says Grace, "and my husband—"

"Your husband!" says the startled

Gretchen, dropping her parasol. "Was he here also?"

"Certainly my husband is here."

"But he go away pretty quick? Yes?"

"He remains right here with his wife," says Grace, firmly, "where he belongs."

"Oh, my! What do the people say?"

"Will you come to the kitchen?" asks Grace, wearily.

"Excuse me," replies Gretchen.

"Oh, my! A husband right here in the house all the time—before everybody! Oh, my! Excuse me. I go back to Sylvia Grahame. Yes."

"Very well," says Grace, coldly. "I will prepare lunch myself."

When Grace has disappeared in the direction of the kitchen Peg on the mantelpiece sees something that she feels almost carries her back to the days before she was turned into bisque. She sees Gretchen remove her bonnet, and with it her mass of yellow hair; sees her step out of her loose-fitting dress, take off her coarse cotton gloves, and stand revealed as Sylvia Grahame in a neat bicycle costume. She quickly places the articles of her disguise in the carpet bag, which she carries with the umbrella to the veranda and throws over the rail. Then she returns, waves her hand at smiling bisque Peg, and says:

"Ah, that's better than changing behind a hedge. Spencer will hide the stuff somewhere. But oh, what awful fibs I've been telling! They hit the mark, though, Peggy, my girl. You see if they didn't!"

Just here Grace enters from the kitchen, fumbling in her purse, and saying, without looking up:

"I forgot your fare back to the city, Gretchen. Here it is."

"How do you do, Cousin Grace?" says Sylvia. "Seeing your charming breakfast-room deserted I walked right in from the veranda."

"Cousin Sylvia!" ejaculates Grace, in confusion, all unconscious of the trick played on her.

They kiss perfunctorily, for Grace's

manner is not warmly hospitable. Overcoming her embarrassment she asks, coolly and pointedly:

"Your husband? Will he be here soon?"

"Oh," says Sylvia, with animation, "I can't have him following me about. Such a thing is fatal to one in my profession. I suppose he is at his boarding-house in West Thirty-fourth street." And she yawns.

It is evident to Peg on the mantelpiece that Grace says to herself: "Gretchen told the truth. There are the stockings, too!"

Then she says to Sylvia: "What a pretty cycling suit! But don't you find the stockings rather warm?"

"Oh, they're not so warm," laughs Sylvia, while Grace's countenance shows that she is thinking: "That settles it."

"Do you think Gretchen will do?" asks Sylvia, after an awkward pause.

"Gretchen refused to stay," replies Grace, in crisp tones, "when she discovered that I lived with my husband. She said it was not respectable."

"Trust Gretchen to know all the prejudices of my profession," says Sylvia. "But it is really too bad."

"Oh, I'll get along somehow," replies Grace, and she busies herself clearing up the breakfast dishes.

"Why bother about the dishes?" says Sylvia. "Suppose we go over the lines of *Juliet* while we wait Spencer's return. First, I'd like to see you in the kangaroo dance—"

"Excuse me," says Grace, coldly; "I've given up all that."

"What! With your ideal face and figure?"

"You will think me silly, I know," says Grace, wiping her eyes, "but I—I—love m—my hus—husband. I

couldn't bear to have him out of m—my sight."

"Oh, you'll get over all that," says Sylvia, cheerily.

"Never! never! I won't run the risk. I'll keep him right here—always!" And poor Grace falls to weeping over the dishes.

At this interesting juncture Spencer, his attire more disordered than ever, hatless and coatless, dashes into the room, carrying in his arms the speckled hen with a cord attached to her leg and trailing behind. He appears not to notice Sylvia, but bursts forth to Grace:

"Here's the culprit, Gracie. It's no use sousing her in the horse trough. Wetting is no good. She'd set on the bounding billows in mid-ocean. I never saw such a hen! When we go on the road, darling, I'm going to take her along—to break the monotony of Shakespeare—Hello, Sylvia! Anything wrong, Gracie?"

Then Peg on the mantelpiece smiles benignantly on the fitting end of the comedy. Grace throws herself into Spencer's arms—ignoring the speckled hen, which flops to the floor and makes her exit by way of the veranda—and says, through her tears:

"Forgive me, darling. I was wrong. I am not going to drag you back into the life you detest. We'll stay right here, darling, all our lives, with our great love and our simple joys—"

"And the speckled hen," adds Spencer.

"After all," says Sylvia to Peg, "I half believe the world has lost a great *Juliet*."

At which Peg Woffington smiles in her bright, bisque fashion, and the curtain descends.



COUNTING THE COST

"**D**ID you ever go to a church fair?"

"Once."

"Lose anything?"

"My religion."

MR. POLTROON

A DELAYED SOLUTION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE RUE MARBEUF

By Charles Stokes Wayne

THE name of the fellow first attracted my attention. I was made acquainted with him in the cozy little American café that a few years ago had an existence on the Rue de la Paix, and that was known as "Harry's Snuggery." I cannot recall now who it was that spoke the words of introduction, but on the instant my curiosity was aroused by the appellation, "Mr. Poltroon." He was a well-favored fellow, with an open, frank expression and a manner that was thoroughly winning, which caused me to wonder all the more how he came by such a curiously inappropriate name. Subsequent inquiry elicited the fact that Mr. Poltroon was one of the numerous army of Paris guides; and then I marveled all the more that a person could hold for long such a position with such a handicap. He was not an ignorant man; on the contrary, his conversation indicated that he possessed an excellent education and that he was, moreover, unusually bright and clever. Under the circumstances I could not understand why he did not change his name for something less suggestive.

It was fully a month after our first meeting that I ran across him again, in the same place. It was, I remember, a very warm evening in August, and after we had vainly endeavored to cool off with several well-iced brandies and sodas, Poltroon himself suggested that we might find a pleasanter atmosphere at the Jardin de Paris. I accepted the proposition gladly, and hailing a *fiacre*, we were

soon on our way to that gay resort in the shadow of the Palais de l'Industrie.

The concert, which is more in the nature of what we in America call a variety show, was nearly over when we arrived, and we took places in the rear of the rows of benches that face the stage, upon which, at the moment, a woman in short skirts and a bonnet twice the size of her body was warbling, with the accompaniment of many winks and a rather free display of belaced petticoats and other *lingerie*, a song of the most indelicate type. In the course of the song there occurred a bit of French slang with which I was not familiar, and when I turned to Poltroon to ask the meaning I found him so absorbed in watching someone a little further front, and just across the aisle from us, that he did not hear my question. When I repeated it I discovered that he had not been listening to the song at all, and having missed the connection, was unable to satisfy my curiosity.

To the fellow's credit I must add that he seemed very much annoyed at this, for while I had not engaged him in his official capacity as guide, I had paid for the *fiacre* and I had also paid a franc for his admission to the garden, and he seemed to feel that he was under certain obligations to me for these reasons. After a moment of hesitation he pointed out the woman at whom I fancied he had been gazing, and remarked *sotto voce* that he wished me to observe her closely.

She was not a young woman. I should say she was at least thirty-five,

perhaps forty. Her hair, of which she possessed an abundance, was a natural Titian red, and her complexion, at the distance, appeared about as nearly perfect as one could imagine. It was, however, her figure that I remarked most. There was something about it that was particularly stirring to the senses. She was tall and slender, and yet I do not remember ever to have seen more alluring lines. She reminded me of the Venus de' Medici clad in purple and fine linen. Through a filmy white stuff the flesh tints of her back, shoulders and arms showed clearly, and there was an indefinable charm in the way the bright copper-color of her hair coquetted with the dazzling milk-white of her perfect neck. Though she wore few jewels, there was an air of sumptuous richness about her that told me she was well cared for, and in the little, stout, black-bearded man that sat by her side I recognized a Hebrew banker whom I had met years before in Vienna, and who was reputed to be possessed of almost fabulous wealth.

Poltroon and I strolled about the garden together for a while after the performance ended, and just as a crowd had begun to gather round the band stand and dancing floor in the centre to witness the rather questionable exhibition of the paid quadrille dancers, he suggested that we sit down at one of the many little tables under the trees and have something to drink. Up to this moment he had seemed preoccupied and reticent. He had made no offer to explain why he wished me to notice the woman I have just described, but I judged from his manner that he not only knew something of her, but that she had once exercised an important influence over him. And in this, as subsequent events proved, I was not mistaken.

We each ordered a brandy and soda, and as Poltroon sipped the drink that was brought him his reserve gradually melted, and after a few preliminary observations on the curious temperament of women in general, he came to speak of the woman who at

that moment occupied the thoughts of us both.

"She is an American," he said, with, I thought, a just perceptible slur on the nationality, though he knew full well that I, too, was from across the sea. Of his own birthplace I was still ignorant, though I fancied he was English. "And she has a history," he added, "a most interesting history, I believe, though I have never heard all of it. However, I know enough to make an interesting little story, and it may interest you more than that business over there," wagging his head in the direction of the music and the dancers, from which shouts of merriment now reached us.

I expressed a desire to hear it, and Poltroon, after offering me a cigarette and lighting one himself, proceeded.

"What I know of her happened in Monte Carlo three years ago. There was a young American there with a nurse. We'll call the American Robinson—though that was not his name—and the nurse—well, his name doesn't matter. She was known then as Mrs. Rickshaw, and she was a damn sight more beautiful than she is now—she has aged a good deal in the last three years. Well, Robinson was a consumptive, a young fellow, sent to the Riviera for his health. He was worth a pot of money, and he carried a letter of credit for fifty thousand dollars. I think he knew Mrs. Rickshaw in the States, and I rather fancy she followed him out there. At all events, they were together at Monte Carlo, and the nurse, who wasn't half as strict as he should have been, winked at it all, and—what do you suppose? Why, the next thing he knew he was head over ears in love with Mrs. Rickshaw himself. Robinson was supposed to be at Mentone. There he drew his money and from there all his letters were posted home, but he was living at the Hôtel de Paris in Monte Carlo all the time, and spending his days at the Casino with that woman for his companion. I never saw such luck as the fellow had at the tables. He won day after day, and

the excitement kept him going. I don't think he had drawn a franc for months, and he had in ready cash something like four hundred thousand francs hidden away in his room as the result of his gaming."

As the fellow talked I watched him closely. He was very blond, with a small downy mustache, and the only fault in his almost perfect face was the smallness of his eyes, which he seemed to hold half-closed the better part of the time. They were, too, rather close together, which argued, I had been taught, cupidity, though I had never observed any indication of this during my brief acquaintance with him. Now, however, that he laid so much stress on the money question I began to suspect that his eyes did not contradict his character.

"The nurse," he continued, "was a poor man, as nurses usually are; and he began to fancy, after a while, that this woman, Mrs. Rickshaw, would prefer him if he had the money, and if Robinson were poor. Why, he asked himself, should she care for an invalid in preference to a hale, hearty fellow like himself, unless it was for the luxuries that the invalid could shower upon her? As time went on his passion grew. My God! what a terrible thing it is to get that bug in your brain! You can't think straight. You make yourself believe impossibilities. You exaggerate your ability and lessen the difficulties in your path. The nurse felt satisfied that if Robinson were out of the way, and Robinson's money his, Mrs. Rickshaw would be his also. She had certainly given him many an indication that he was not distasteful to her. And—have you ever thought how much an invalid is in the power of his nurse?"

He asked me the question and waited for an answer. I told him that I had never considered the subject.

"I have," he added; "and what surprises me is that we don't hear of more instances of misplaced confidence in that direction. Why, it was the easiest thing in the world for that nurse to—"

He hesitated, and then, for the first time, I began to suspect something. My suspicions, however, were very vague at first, and I chided myself, mentally, for permitting them to get anything like a foothold.

"Let us have another brandy and soda," he said. And until the drinks were brought he was silent, simply lighting another cigarette and regarding the lighted end from time to time in a fit of seeming abstraction.

"Well," I said at last, "what happened?"

"Oh, yes," he went on; "I beg your pardon, but my thoughts were wandering. There's not very much more of it. The nurse—that is to say, Robinson was found dead in his bed one morning. He had died of hemorrhage in the night. There were all the evidences of it—blood on his lips, blood on the sheet and pillows; and when it was all ended and the body shipped back to America, what do you suppose? It was found that he had been losing heavily at the Casino. Every centime had been drawn on his letter of credit. Not over fifty francs were discovered in his room. And the nurse—well, the nurse was not looking for a new berth just then. On the contrary, he was following Mrs. Rickshaw, who had instantly disappeared. He found her, I believe, in Lucerne, and if I know the story, he made violent love to her. The nurse was well provided with funds. He gave her very handsome presents. The diamonds with which he presented her might have been bought by a prince of the blood royal. And then—Mrs. Rickshaw suspected. She not only suspected, but she accused, and she not only accused, but she wheedled out a confession. Even then she was not satisfied. She asked proofs; and when she had proofs—oh, the rest of the story is easy. She simply wished that miserable nurse to buy her silence. The nurse bought it, and when he had paid the price Mrs. Rickshaw was worth twelve thousand pounds sterling and the nurse was a pauper. His passion had maddened him, made a fool of him,

and she—well, I shall never forget how she laughed!"

He stopped suddenly and looked at me with an odd expression of distrust in his eyes. I pretended not to notice the last exclamation or his expression, and I saw that my pretense had its effect.

"Mrs. Rickshaw disappeared the next day. He tried to follow her, but he lost all trace, and from that time until—until one night he happened to see her here in the Jardin de Paris, he never set eyes on her."

"And what did he do then?" I asked, with as much nonchalance as I could assume.

Poltroon appeared to be somewhat taken aback by my question. He stared at me in a dazed sort of way, and then in his little eyes I noticed an angry glitter that spoke of vengeance unwrought.

"What did he do?" he repeated at last, with a determined ring in his voice. "What did he do? He followed her to her home and—" he caught his breath suddenly, and the last two words were hissed through his teeth—"killed her!"

I stared at the man now in undisguised amazement.

"Killed her!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean? Why, I am sure she is not dead. I saw her, and you saw her, not half an hour ago, with old Rosenbaum, the Vienna banker."

He laughed with a wild, weird, ghastly merriment.

"She is a dead woman, I tell you," he went on; "dead as the Pharaohs."

And then, draining his glass, he rose to his feet.

The dancing about the band stand was over, and a crowd surged by us, moving toward the gates. I turned to pick up my hat, which was lying on the table; and when I had placed it on my head, and stood up, I missed Poltroon from my side. He had disappeared in the throng, and I never saw him again.

All Paris was ringing next day with what the newspapers chose to style "The Mystery of the Rue Marbeuf." A certain "Madame Reecksha," as they put it, had been strangled in her apartments at dawn, supposedly by a burglar, of whom the authorities had been able to discover no trace whatever.

In the mail that was handed to me that evening by the *portier* at my hotel was a square envelope, addressed in a nervous hand. Intuition told me that it was from Poltroon, and investigation proved that intuition was correct.

"To-morrow," he wrote, "they will find my body floating in the Seine. If you come to the Morgue you may identify me; but the world will not bother over a Poltroon's departure—it will be too busy speculating over the death of the woman that made him what he was."

I did not go to the Morgue; and I never before volunteered to solve the "Mystery of the Rue Marbeuf," which I could, you see, so easily have done.



FROM ASPIRING ADHERENTS

"WE are thinking," remarked the perennial office-seeker, importantly, as he strolled into the flower emporium, "of presenting a floral piece to the new representative of this district. Something appropriate, you know. What would you suggest?"

"H'm, let me see," reflected the florist, thoughtfully. "How would a pillow of forget-me-nots do?"

TO EVERY MAN A DAMSEL OR TWO

By R. W. St. Hill

“I AM sorry,” she said, with gentle firmness, “but it can never be as you wish—really it can’t!”

“But I don’t want you to love me, you know,” he interrupted. “I—”

She turned quickly.

“Don’t you? Why not?” She seemed a little disconcerted.

“No; I only want you to let me love you. You see, you are just the sort of woman I should like to love; and it needn’t worry you a bit. You aren’t called on to do anything at all, except make me love you. Don’t you think that’s easy?”

She had watched his face as he spoke, but when he turned his eyes in thoughtful question from the ash of his cigar to her, reclining gracefully on the couch, she looked away with a little frown.

Of course she meant to make him love her; she always had. Equally, of course, she had no intention of loving him. But somehow she did not like his quiet elimination of herself from all part save that of a lay figure. He said plainly he did not care whether she loved him or not, and he seemed to mean it.

“I think your experiment would not amuse me much,” she said, a little coldly. “But I am glad you understand my feelings. Poor boy!” She looked up at him with affected pity, for somehow she felt vexed. “It’s better to be outspoken; it may save you worse pain later.”

He came and stood over the couch, holding her with a steady gaze.

“Don’t talk about it any more,” she said. “I mean it—I do, really.”

He was kneeling beside her before she was conscious of the movement.

“Very well; we’ll forget all about it.” He took her hand in his so gently that she was conscious only that the warm grasp was rather comforting, rather pleasant.

“Yes,” she said, “it’s silly, really it is, and quite hopeless.”

His eyes were still fixed on hers, and she was so amused at their earnestness that she lay there watching.

“Quite hopeless?” he repeated.

Hazily she thought that perhaps that was an arm stealing round her waist; but then again she was not quite sure, and it would seem foolish to make a fuss about nothing.

“Yes,” she said, mechanically; “quite hopeless!”

She was sure of that arm now, but she felt she ought to have spoken about it sooner. It would look as if she must have known it was there all the time, and besides . . .

“Couldn’t I *ever* make you love me?”

His face bent down to hers too tenderly for her to resent the form of his question. Besides, he amused her.

“It’s hopeless,” she murmured; “really it is.”

“Maud!” he whispered, passionately.

And the sweet appeal would probably have worked like a charm if Maud had not been the name of her sister.

AMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS

JENNIE—I don’t fancy that fat fellow; I’d like to sit on him.
JIMMIE—Well, you’d find considerable seating capacity.

A ROSE WHISPERS

I AM the flower within her garden-close
 She cast aside;
 Ah, had she plucked me, verily God knows
 I had not died.

I would have fought a battle with strong Death,
 And bloomed anew,
 Finding sweet resurrection in her breath
 The long day through.

And had she laid me on her trembling heart,
 New fire had sprung
 Into my crimson petals' every part,
 And made me young.

Yea, I for her had lived again; but oh,
 She passed me by;
 And now, neglected, in the night I go
 Softly—to die!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



WELL-GROUNDED APPREHENSION

JUDDOCK—Hold up a minute, old man; I want to speak to you about that—

HADDOCK—Haven't time. I've got to catch this next train for Sandswamp-by-the-Sea.

JUDDOCK—Why, what's going on?

HADDOCK—My wife's sick—terribly sick.

JUDDOCK—That's too bad, old chap, too bad. Nothing dangerous, I hope?

HADDOCK—I don't know yet. I can't imagine what it can be. She was all right when she left for there a couple of days ago. But it's serious enough to confine her to her bed, anyway.

JUDDOCK—But didn't your communication say?

HADDOCK—I haven't had any.

JUDDOCK—How do you know she's so sick, then?

HADDOCK—She hasn't telegraphed for anything she forgot.

ALEX. RICKETTS.



HER RECKLESS PASSION

REBECCA—Vasn't dat a nice luf ledder I wrote you, Ikey tear?

IKEY—Yes, Beccy; but make it shorter negst dime. I had to bay two cents due bostage on dat ledder.

